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Table of Contents

Articles:

ANTONIO CARLO: *Lenin on the Party*
RUSSELL JACOBY: *Laing, Cooper, and the Tension in Theory and Therapy*
PIER ALDO ROVATTI: *The Critique of Fetishism in Marx's* Grundrisse
ROBERT D'AMICO: *The Coutours and Coupures of Structuralist Theory*
MARIO TRONTI: *Social Capital*

Notes and Commentary:

S. FRANKEL & D. MARTIN: *The Budapest School*
HUNGARIAN COMMUNIST PARTY: *A Document*
A. HEGEDUS & M. MARKUS: *Modernization and the Alternatives of Social Progress*
IVAN SVITAK: *Marginal Notes on Prague Spring 1968*
EFRAIM SHMUELI: *Can Phenomenology Accomodate Marxism?*

Reviews:

WILLIAM LEISS: B. Moore, *The Causes of Human Misery*
STUART EWEN: H. Schiller, *The Mind Managers*
RONALD RADOSH: M. Lowy, *The Marxism of Che*

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Table of Contents

ARTICLES:

Lenin on the Party 2
Antonio Carlo

Laing, Cooper and the Tension in Theory and Therapy 41
Russell Jacoby

The Critique of Fetishism in Marx's *Grundrisse* 56
Pier Aldo Rovatti

The Contours and Coupures of Structuralist Theory 70
Robert D'Amico

Social Capital 98
Mario Tronti

NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

The Budapest School 122
Serge Frankel and Daniel Martin

Hungarian Party Document 134

Modernization and the Alternatives of Social Progress 145
András Hegedüs and Mária Márkus

Marginal Notes on Prague Spring 1968 157
Ivan Svitak

Can Phenomenology Accomodate Marxism? 169
Efraim Shmueli

REVIEWS:

Barrington Moore, Jr., *Reflections on the Causes of Human Misery and upon Certain Proposals to Eliminate Them* 182
William Leiss

Herbert I. Schiller, *The Mind Managers* 185
Stuart Ewen

Michael Lowy, *The Marxism of Che Guevara* 189
Ronald Radosh

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*Lenin on the Party**

by Antonio Carlo

Introduction

Today there is a great interest in reconstructing Lenin's thought concerning the relation between vangard and masses. Lenin's definitive theses on the problem are seen to have been outlined in his famous and much discussed work, *What Is to Be Done?* which, for some, remains the only scientific answer to the problem (not fully developed by Marx and Engels) of the passage from "class-in-itself" to "class-for-itself."[1] For others, this work, impregnated by intellectualism and idealism, is seen as a classic of the Stalinist era and is held to be the root of all the bureaucratic deviations of the Soviet experience.[2] Clearly, *What Is to Be Done?* is a negative work and it is absolutely wrong to see in it Lenin's only or most important position on the relation between vangard and masses. In fact, on this point, the thought of the Russian revolutionary is extremely torn and contradictory. After 1902 (the year of *What Is to Be Done?*) he developed a whole series of analyses and positions totally opposed to the theses of *What Is to Be Done?* and implying their actual rejection. It is difficult to estimate to what an extent Lenin was aware of this revision which was brought about by the historical development of the Russian labor movement. Certainly Lenin, like Marx himself, was not a thinker free of contradictions. He underwent a development, which means that he went beyond and rejected certain earlier analyses. Lenin was not always clearly aware of this. Like Marx, he lacked a "science of his own science." Therefore, commentators must reconstruct the analyses in his works in order to see to what extent they can be integrated within a coherent conceptual system.

Lenin himself provides us with some hints. Apparently, in 1921 Lenin told the French Marxist Max Levien that *What Is to Be Done?* could be translated into French only if it was prefaced by an authoritative Bolshevik's clarification of the doubts and ambiguities the work could have

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* Originally published as a book: *Lenin sul Partito* (Bari, 1970). Translated from the Italian by Thomas Hull.

1. As is well-known, these are the theses of various neo-Stalinist groups.
2. This has been recently claimed in the editorial of *Classe e Stato*, no. 5 ("Praga: La Dialettica della Restaurazione"). Left-wing criticisms of Lenin are usually connected with Luxemburg and Korsch; see Karl Korsch, "The Present State of *Marxism and Philosophy*—An Anti-Critique" in *Marxism and Philosophy* (London, 1970). Many other writers have also claimed that *What Is to Be Done?* contains Lenin's last word on the party. Cf. George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (New York, 1961), pp. 721 ff.; Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957); and Luciano Gruppi, "Introduzione" to Lenin, *Che Fare?* (Rome, 1968), pp. 7 ff.

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produced.[3] This is very credible since in 1907 Lenin himself admitted that, in dealing with the problem of the relation between spontaneity and consciousness (the central theme of *What Is to Be Done?*), he had used vague and unsuitable expressions which his opponents (e.g., Plekhanov) had tried to capitalize on.[4]

Lenin is ambiguous on this point (which are the unfortunate expressions and to what extent are they so?). Yet, already in 1905 he considered *What Is to Be Done?* a work written under obsolete historical conditions. Thus, the development of polemics and events must have been such that only three years after the publication of *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin no longer considered it tenable to defend the historical relevance of its theoretical positions.[5]

Obviously, today it is no longer possible to reconstruct Lenin's psychological state, nor is it possible to know exactly what he thought about that work. Yet, ideas have their own import and objective meaning, independently of what their creators may think. This work is directed precisely at reconstructing in its historical context the tortuous development of Lenin's thought, independently of what he may have thought about its contradictory character.

Lenin's Early Positions (1895-1896)

Official Soviet historiography generally presents Lenin as an absolutely coherent and infallible individual: he always understands everything immediately and finds solutions to problems years ahead of common mortals. Thus, Lenin, whose thought continually developed in an always open and problematic dialectic with history, is transformed into the guardian angel of the revolution.[6] We shall attempt to show how Lenin's views on this matter were extremely problematic and reflected the historical context within which they arose.

Lenin's first analyses of this subject ("Draft Program of the Social-Democratic Party")[7] date back to 1895 and put forth positions altogether different from those of *What Is to Be Done?* In this work Lenin deals with the tasks of developing Russian Social-Democracy. Its task is to develop proletarian class consciousness. Here Lenin does not argue that this consciousness must be elaborated and brought to the workers from outside:

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3. On this point, see Luciano Amodio, "Il Contrasto Lenin-Rosa Luxemburg sull'organizazione del Partito," in *Quaderni Piacentini*, no. 21, p. 12 n.
4. Lenin, "Preface" to the Collection *Twelve Years*, now reprinted in *Collected Works* (Moscow, 1963), vol. XIII, pp. 94 ff.
5. Lenin, "Our Tasks and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies," in *Collected Works*, vol. X, pp. 17-28.
6. For an example of this see the recent Russian biography written by a committee of authors: *Lenin* (New York, 1943).
7. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. II, pp. 93 ff.

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it is seen as developing in the factories within the relationship between workers and bosses as it "inevitably" develops in the economic struggle. Therefore, the task of Social-Democrats is to become part of this struggle and sustain it in order to aid the internal development of proletarian class consciousness.[8]

Lenin's theses are quite clear on this point: "Thus the struggle of the factory workers against the employers inevitably turns into a struggle against the entire capitalist class, against the entire social order based on the exploitation of labour by capital."[9] Thus, unlike what Lenin was to maintain in 1902 in explicitly distinguishing between Social-Democratic and trade-unionist consciousness and politics, a consciousness which is not simply trade-unionistic "inevitably" develops out of the labor struggle. This is seen as a result of the fact that the class does not simply struggle against particular aspects of capitalism (e.g., low wages and bad working conditions), but against the whole capitalist structure. As a result, a revolutionary consciousness develops within the economic struggle. Further on, summarizing his argument, Lenin writes: "The workers' class consciousness means the workers' understanding that the only way to improve their conditions and to achieve their emancipation is to conduct a struggle against the capitalist and factory-owner class created by the big factories. Further, the workers' class consciousness means their understanding that the interests of all the workers of any particular country are identical, that they all constitute one class, separate from all the other classes in society. Finally, the class consciousness of the workers means the workers' understanding that to achieve their aims they have to work to influence affairs of state, just as the landlords and the capitalists did, and are continuing to do now. *By what means do the workers reach an understanding of all this? They do so by constantly gaining experience from the very struggle that they begin to wage against the employers and that increasingly develops, becomes sharper, and involves larger numbers of workers as big factories grow. Thirdly, this struggle develops the workers' political consciousness.* The living conditions of the mass of working folk places them in such a position that they do not (cannot) possess either the leisure or the opportunity to ponder over problems of state. *On the other hand the workers' struggle against the factory owners for their daily needs automatically and inevitably spurs the workers on to think of state, political questions, questions of how the Russian state is governed, how laws and regulations are issued, and whose interests they serve. Each clash in the factory necessarily brings the workers into conflict with the laws and representatives of state authority.*[10]

8. *Ibid.*, pp. 95 ff. and especially pp. 98 ff.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 197.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 112-115. Italics added.

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From these passages it is clear that for Lenin political consciousness "spontaneously and inevitably" originates from life and struggles in the factory. These struggles lead workers to radically antagonistic positions with respect to capitalism (the struggle in the "whole" capitalist social structure mentioned earlier by Lenin), and to understand the class nature of laws and of the state. The immediate outcome of these struggles is the awareness that it is necessary to influence "the politics of the Russian state." But, Lenin notes, that can happen only through the acquisition of constitutionally guaranteed political rights (i.e., through the tearing down of Tsarist autocracy).

This type of consciousness (the struggle to destroy autocracy) is Social-Democratic political consciousness. In the 1895-1896 period there is no doubt in Lenin's mind that this consciousness originates in factory relations and struggles. In fact, it is within these relations that workers understand "whose interests" are served by the laws and by the state—hence their class nature and the need to struggle for political rights. However, in *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin maintains that: "Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers *only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers. The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships of *all* classes and strata to the state and the government, the sphere of the interrelations between all classes.[11]

This is completely different from Lenin's viewpoint seven years earlier. At that time the function of the party was to help the development of consciousness by participating in the struggles which inevitably arise in the factories both as a result of workers' distaste for the whole capitalist structure (and not just for some secondary characteristics, as in trade-unionism) and the will to struggle against autocracy and for the Constitution (so to move on to a more advanced battleground). This formulation, according to which the proletariat's consciousness and political organization is the inevitable and therefore spontaneous fruit of union struggles, is very close to economism—even if Lenin poses the problem of hastening this "inevitable" process. This can be seen by what Lenin wrote shortly afterwards in 1896: "The strikes of 1895-96 have not been in vain. They have been of tremendous service to the Russian workers. They have shown them how to wage the struggle for their interests. They have taught them to understand the political situation and *the political needs of the working class.*"[12]

Strikes, therefore, generate political consciousness. Here, Lenin did not distinguish between revolutionary and trade-unionist political consciousness

11. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?" in *Collected Works*, vol. V., p. 422. Italics in original.
12. Lenin, "To the Tsarist Government," in *Collected Works*, vol. II, p. 127.

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as he was to do several years later. The problem here is to historically locate Lenin's early positions. Undoubtedly, he was influenced by the predominant primitivism obtaining in Russian socialist circles from 1894 to 1901. As Lenin himself was to later clarify, primitivism dealt with workers' struggles in a crude, haphazard manner (whence the name "primitivism"). The members of the circles unreservedly threw themselves into the workers' economic struggles, without first dealing with the question of forming a solid, centralized revolutionary organization. This tendency subsequently generated its own theory as well which, while justifying the spontaneous and disorganized activities of the circles, in fact subsumed the movement to spontanety, thus "freezing" it at its initial stages.[13] In 1901 Lenin was to define primitivism as the root of economism and of every form of spontaneism, i.e., as the main emeny to defeat.[14] A year later his analysis of the same phenomenon sounded like a self-criticism. To the question "What is primitivism?" Lenin answered by describing the activity of a typical Russian circle from 1894-1901—and it is well known that in 1894 and 1895 Lenin himself was politically connected with a "typical" Social-Democratic circle (the St. Petersburg Union of Struggle).

Lenin pointed out that as early as 1895 there were in Russia Social-Democratic elements (including Lenin himself) seeking to form a party. But, at the same time, he also indicated the errors and limitations of this "primitive" work.[15] Thus, Lenin's own admissions indicate how he himself was involved in "primitivism." Of course, within this context, Lenin held a very advanced position, having understood the immediate importance of the problem of the party.[16] Yet, he still saw the rise of revolutionary consciousness as a spontaneous-mechanical result of factory struggles. The task of Social-Democrats was solely to hasten this spontaneous phenomenon. There is no emphasis here on the external character of consciousness with respect to the basic class struggle (such as in *What Is to Be Done?*). Rather, Lenin's primitive spontaneism falls into the opposite excess: although revolutionary consciousness can only come about within the local or international workers' class struggle and cannot be externally introduced, in any given historical point the passage from the basic class struggle to consciousness is not a mechanical or "inevitable" result. This process is a dialectical one whose outlet, precisely because of this, is not "a

13. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?" in *Collected Works*, vol. V, pp. 440 ff. and 451 ff.
14. Lenin, "Letter to Tsederbaum," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXXIV, pp. 78-79.
15. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?" in *Collected Works*, vol. V, pp. 441 ff. Elsewhere Lenin points out the crude and primitive character of his own work during this period: see Lenin, "A Draft Programme of our Party," *ibid.*, vol. IV, pp. 229-254.
16. In the context of the circles the problem of the party had not been underestimated since they themselves sought to form a party in 1898. Yet, the spontaneists saw the party as the automatic consequence of the movement and tended to give it a decentralized structure (a federation of circles) altogether inadequate to struggling against autocracy. Primarily because this tendency prevailed, the 1898 effort did not go beyond the planning stage.

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priori" determined according to the mechanical-spontaneist perspective. Political class consciousness can only arise within the context of labor struggles. Yet, this is not "necessarily" the case. The outcome of the process is always possible, but never a priori (or guaranteed).

The Turn of 1897 and the Works Preceding What Is to Be Done?

During 1897 something new took place in the nascent Russian labor movement. The great strikes of 1895-96 ended without any significant accomplishments: they generated neither consciousness nor a political party. The only tangible result was an aborted law concerning factory conditions and working hours a year later (1897). But, as usual, deeds precede consciousness and, although defeated in practice, primitivism remained firmly rooted in the consciousness of nascent Social-Democratic groups (and circles). Furthermore, it even generated the political current of economism by specifying and articulating its positions and seeking to institutionalize the experiences of 1895-96.

Lenin, on the other hand, began to pose the problem of the inadequacy of purely economic and unionist activity, thus already revealing himself to be the great revolutionary prepared to learn the lesson of events. On the occasion of the new factory law he critically analyzed it. The conclusions were decidedly negative: passed after the 1895-96 strikes, the law not only offered the employers a series of loopholes, but did not essentially modify the total number of working hours demanded by the working class. Thus, the main objective of the movement had not been attained.[17] What was positive was that the government had been forced to make concessions, even if only formal ones. Therefore, the moment is coming when "all these masses, led by one party, the Socialist party, present their joint demands," and "the government will no longer be able to get away with such an insignificant concession."[18]

Thus, only the party can assure an adequate political outcome to the workers' economic struggles, and the necessary preconditions are now present, i.e, the fact that the movement was no longer merely local, but had become national. Without the party even simple union struggles produce only insignificant concessions. Even in the context of the economic and trade-unionistic struggles, here the essential importance of the party as well as the autonomy of the political moment, are emphasized as never before.

17. "The New Factory Law," vol. II, pp. 271-315.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 302. Lenin had already indicated (in "Explanation of the Program," *Collected Works*, vol. II, pp. 98-127) how the government had been forced to make some concessions to disorganized workers so that, with the rise of the social-democratic organization, things would undoubtedly improve. In "The New Factory Law," however, he stressed the useless character of these concessions (and, therefore, of the limitations of the factory struggle) with an altogether new vigor with respect to the works of the year before which were essentially focused on the economistic struggle as inevitably producing consciousness.

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Towards the end of 1897 Lenin again dealt with and clarified the same problem in a very important pamphlet: *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats*. Here, he stressed the importance and the autonomy of the political struggle—which in the works of the 1895-96 period had been seen as the necessary consequence and reflection of the economic struggle and, therefore, substantially subordinated to it. Thus, Lenin wrote: "Both economic and political agitation are equally necessary to develop the class consciousness of the proletariat; both economic and political agitation are equally necessary for guiding the class struggle of the Russian workers, because every class struggle is a political struggle."[19] If political consciousness and the political struggle were still considered spontaneous, mechanical reflections of the economic struggle, there would have been no need to stress the autonomous importance of the political moment. Furthermore, anticipating *What Is to Be Done?*, Lenin points out that whereas in the economic struggle workers enter into conflict exclusively against capitalists, in the political struggle they come into contact with all other classes in the population.[20]

The Tasks, however, was still a transitional work, since the economic struggle had not yet been subordinated to the political one (as in *What Is to Be Done?*), but was considered of equal importance. Moreover, consciousness was not to be brought to the proletariat from outside by a group of bourgeois intellectuals who develop it independently of the political-economic domain. Rather, Lenin gave a somewhat pessimistic analysis of intellectuals, concluding that they must be hegemonized by the proletariat (thus, they cannot be considered the bearers of proletarian consciousness): "Educated people, and the 'intelligentsia' generally, cannot but revolt against the savage police tyranny of the autocracy, which hunts down thought and knowledge; but the material interests of this intelligentsia bind it to the autocracy and to the bourgeoisie, compel it to be inconsistent, to compromise, to sell its oppositional and revolutionary ardour for an official salary, or a share of profits or dividends."[21] After 1897 the Russian situation stagnated. In 1898 the circles' "primitivist" attempt to build a party from below failed by producing only a diversified federation of completely decentralized and autonomous circles encompassing various forms of spontaneism.[22]

Consequently, like other intellectuals with similar needs, Lenin began a polemic against spontaneism which later culminated in *What Is to Be Done?* and in the party's Second Congress (actually the First). Between

19. Lenin, "The Task of the Russian Social-Democrats," in *Collected Works*, vol. II, p. 332.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 333.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 335.
22. On this point, see Brone, *Storia del Partito Comunista dell'USSR* (Milan, 1966), pp. 32-33; and Schlesinger, *Il Partito Comunista dell'USSR* (Milan, 1962), pp. 41-42.

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1895 and 1899 Lenin was first in prison and then in exile. While disengaged from political activity—which he nonetheless closely followed while writing *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*—Lenin may have been naturally led to emphasize the importance of the political-theoretical movement. Yet, this "personal" factor would not have been very significant if the Russian situation had not been as previously described, and thus requiring an unrelenting struggle against all forms of spontaneism. In the 1899 articles in *Rabochaya Gazeta* Lenin reiterated and elaborated the thesis concerning the essential nature of the political and theoretical moment, without which union struggles cannot gain anything, even in the economic field.[23]

Lenin's most important article during this period is "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy." Needless to say, the retrograde trend is spontaneism. In this work he substantially anticipates the basis theses of *What Is to Be Done?* and the following passage already contains its fundamental hypotheses: "At first socialism and the working class movement existed separately in all the European countries. The workers struggled against the capitalists, they organized strikes and unions, while the socialists stood aside from the working-class movement, formulated doctrines criticizing the contemporary capitalist, bourgeois system of society and demanding its replacement by another system, the higher, socialist system. The separation of the working-class movement and socialism gave rise to weakness and underdevelopment in each: the theories of the socialists, unfused with the workers' struggle, remained nothing more than utopias, good wishes that had no effect on real life; the working-class movement remained petty, fragmented, and did not acquire political significance, was not enlightened by the advanced science of its time. For this reason we see in all European countries a constantly growing urge to *fuse* socialism with the working-class movement in a single *Social-Democratic* movement. When this fusion takes place the class struggle of the workers becomes *the conscious struggle of the proletariat* to emancipate itself from exploitation by the propertied classes, it is evolved into a higher form of the socialist workers' movement—*the independent working-class Social-Democrat party*. By directing socialism towards a fusion with the working-class movement, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels did their greatest service: they created a revolutionary theory that explained the necessity for this fusion and gave socialists the task of organizing the class struggle of the proletariat."[24] The basic theses of *What Is to Be Done?* are clearly anticipated here: revolutionary consciousness as obtaining outside the working class; the fact that, abandoned to itself, the proletariat does not go beyond corporate limits; and the need for bourgeois intellectuals with

23. Cf. Lenin's articles for *Rabochaya Gazeta* in *Collected Works*, vol. IV, pp. 210-226.
24. Lenin, "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy," in *Collected Works*, vol. IV, pp. 257-258.

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socialist leanings, such as Marx and Engels, to work out a revolutionary science and "donate it" to the proletariat in order to organize its struggle.

Along with other writings of the same period, this demonstrates Lenin's close connection with the problems of the Russian labor movement (the struggle against spontaneism). The latter had even more influence on Lenin than Kautsky, whose theoretical contributions carried much weight in all international Social-Democracy between 1900 and 1914.[25] Kautsky's influence on Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* can be explained by the fact that, by stressing "political consciousness" in dealing with problems of revolutionary organization and the outcome of class struggle, Kautsky, in addition to giving him theoretical legitimacy, offered him a weapon to defeat the predominant economism in the Russian labor movement and the main obstacle to its development. In other words, Lenin accepted and reiterated Kautsky's general theoretical positions in order to resolve the internal polemic of Russian Social-Democracy. Also relevant is the political influence of Lenin's future colleague in *Iskra*, and at the time concerned with similar practical problems—Martov—whom Lenin refers to for a broad historical elaboration of the theses exposed in the cited passage.[26]

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25. Between 1900 and 1914, Kautsky directly influenced Lenin on many other points as well. There is little doubt that at that time Lenin was much closer to the center of the Second International than to the left (Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg). On this, see Georges Haupt, "Lenin, i Bolshevichi, e la Seconda Internazionale," in *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, no. 29, pp. 3 ff.). This has been a taboo for Soviet historiography since Stalin bureaucratically intervened against those historians who tried to clarify this aspect of Lenin's political life (see Joseph Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* [Moscow, 1945], p. 424). Moreover, Lenin's branding as reactionary the claim that a country can attain socialism without passing through a bourgeois phase is clearly Kautskian. Thus, Lenin could argue that "the democratic dictatorship of workers and peasants" before passing through socialism would have to bring about a bourgeois phase in Russia. The schematic and mechanical theories of the Second International are well known. According to them, it was impossible for any country to skip a stage of the development undergone by modern Europe and valid for all peoples. Therefore, wherever the bourgeoisie was weak and underdeveloped, its revolution had to be completed by workers and peasants. (Marx, of course, never held this: see Marx and Engels, *India, Cina, Russia*, Milan, 1965). Similarly, in *Die Agrarfrage* (Stuttgart, 1899), Kautsky argued that there was an autonomous, intermediary "civil state"—a passing link between bourgeois democracy and socialism, which is not the dictatorship of the proletariat (these theses are similar to Togliatti's progressive democratic theses on the state in the days immediately following WWII, and the fundamental nucleus of the theory of the "Italian road to socialism"). In reviewing Kautsky's work, Lenin (see *Collected Works*, vol. IV, pp. 94-99), praised this work without critically touching upon this extremely fundamental point. These observations concerning Lenin's relation to the center of the Second International between 1900 and 1914 could go on. (Recall Lenin's attitude towards the Kautsky-Luxemburg polemic of 1910, the crude mechanism of *Materialism and Empiriocriticism*, etc.). Lenin overcame Kautsky's influence after 1914. Works such as *Imperialism: the Last Stage of Capitalism* and *State and Revolution* show a definite autonomy from the German thinker. The history of the relationship between Lenin and Kautsky is yet to be written and has not been written, at least in Italy, in order not to admit the considerable influence that Kautsky had on many of Lenin's theoretical and political positions between 1900 and 1914.

26. Apparently, the Russian context seemed to be amenable to the Lenin-Martov interpretation (revolutionary consciousness worked out from outside the proletariat) since Marxist theory had been vigorously developed in Russian when the proletariat and the class struggle

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Turning now to Lenin's life: having finished his confinement in 1900, he went abroad to join Social-Democratic emigré groups. The new situation was such as to reinforce his positons: the intellectual's environment of *Iskra*, in which Lenin participated, had among its objectives the defeat of the primitivism of Russian Social-Democratic circles. This was meant to generate a real centralized party to replace the phony 1898 federation of circles. This had to be accomplished from above since the 1898 experience of building from below had failed. The group of *Iskra* intellectuals had to defeat the circles' primitivism from outside Russian reality, by bringing them theoretical consciousness and organization.

In other words, Lenin's and *Iskra*'s situation seemed to contain the most suitable model for the basic theses of *What Is to Be Done?* Moreover, the situation in Russia did not show signs of changing. In a letter of 1901 Lenin reiterated the necessity of defeating spontaneism and first of all its roots: the primitivism of the circles.[27] Such a situation seemed to require the external intervention of the *Iskra* group: the only one able to resolve it. The time was ripe for an unrelented struggle against every form of spontaneism. *What Is to Be Done?* was published in 1902.

The Theses of What Is to Be Done?

In *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin wrote: "We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It would have to be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort is able to develop only trade-union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers, and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc. *The Theory of Socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals.* By their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. *In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of thought among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia.*"[28]

Shortly afterwards, to legitimate what he has claimed, Lenin cited a long

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was barely at its initial phase. Yet, the interpretation remained conditioned by the tactical necessity of reiterating the importance of the theoretical-political moment against the economists. Actually, as we shall see, the causes of the development of Marxism in Russia must be sought elsewhere than in "the natural and inevitable thought of Russian socialist intellectuals," as Lenin maintained in *What Is to Be Done?*

27. Cf. Lenin, "Letter to Tsederbaum," *op.cit.*
28. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?" in *Collected Works*, vol. IV, pp. 257-258.

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passage from Kautsky illustrating analogous views. Yet, the Russian revolutionary felt a need to water down his extreme theses, and admitted that workers too could give life to Social-Democracy. It should be pointed out, however, that they adhere to it and are accepted as *intellectuals* and not as *workers*.[29] Therefore, the party is formed by a group of extraneous elements (bourgeois intellectuals) or estranged from the proletariat (workers who, by adhering to Social-Democracy, are considered intellectuals, i.e., extraneous to the working class). The class, closed in itself and in factory relations, cannot reach a revolutionary consciousness requiring a global vision of society but, at most, a trade-unionist political consciousness, which is the consciousness of the proletariat subordinated to the bourgeoisie.

Needless to say, the party does not exhaust its function *uno actu*: there is no metahistorical consciousness given once and for all. Precisely because off this, Lenin stressed a strong centralized party, based on the power of "ten vigorous minds," which would guide, educate and politicize the masses in the course of the struggle. The party must exist precisely in order to fulfill this continuous function of directing the masses and giving them consciousness. Moreover, in 1902, the undemocratic character of such a model of organization is not solely a function of the Russian situation (the illegality of Social-Democracy). This carries its weight but actually Lenin holds that the application of the democratic principle is something "very relative to the present society." Here, he refers to capitalist society in general and not only to Russia, as can be seen from his reference to the works of Kautsky and the Webbs concerning the English and German labor movements. In a nutshell, Lenin says the following: mass-democracy and workers' direct control do not eliminate the need for specialized functionaries (according to Lenin's examples: the parliamentarian, the journalist, the insurance expert in the unions), who, if it is true that the "application of the democratic principle is very relative," would have to have considerable autonomy with respect to the base.

Thus, as it has often been pointed out, the proletariat ends up by being the object and not the subject of history. Usually, so-called orthodox Leninists fly in a rage whenever this is pointed out. Yet, it does not take

29. Lenin writes: "There can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement." (*Ibid.*, p. 384.) In a note he explains further: "This does not mean, of course, that the workers have no part in creating such an ideology. They take part, however, not as workers, but as socialist theoreticians, as Proudhons and Weitlings." As we can see, Lenin held that revolutionary theory is elaborated by an autonomous social group, intellectuals, who give life to Social-Democracy and introduce socialist theory to the masses from outside (Kautsky's position is identical and Lenin found it "profoundly correct"). The fusion of the labor movement and of socialist intellectuals is seen as the subordination of the former to the latter, who guide and enlighten it by monopolizing consciousness. It is indicative that Lenin cites Kautsky for support here, but finds no support whatsoever in Marx's and Engels' mature works. The only passage from Engels that he cites concerns the significance of revolutionary consciousness, but certainly not its "external" character in relation to the class to which it is to be "brought."

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much to realize that this is the necessary consequence of Lenin's discourse. If a class is unable to elaborate its own consciousness and its own revolutionary organization and must borrow them from other classes, it is subordinate to these other classes and cannot be the subject in the building of a new order. At best, it can only be an instrument in the hands of others. It can be a revolutionary class in the full sense only if it organizes and directs the revolutionary process and does not just participate in it in a subordinate manner. Because of this, the founders of historical materialism (and also Lenin himself elsewhere, Trotsky and Mao) have often emphasized that the petty and the middle bourgeoisie cannot be considered fundamentally revolutionary classes since their social position oscillates between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Yet, they can be hegemonized by the proletariat and take part in the socialist revolution, but only by following the proletariat which, by liberating itself, liberates them as well. In a nutshell, only the proletariat is a truly revolutionary and autonomous class.

In *What Is to Be Done?*, instead, the proletariat is actually assimilated with the petty and middle bourgeoisie. It does not have autonomous revolutionary abilities and, by itself, tends to practice trade-unionism (i.e., to accept bourgeois domination until the arrival of intellectuals who organize and direct it). In this scheme the fundamental classes are the bourgeoisie on one side and the revolutionary intellectuals on the other (but can intellectuals be considered a class?). At the center there are both the petty and middle bourgeois, as well as the proletariat, which oscillates between a trade-unionism subordinated to the bourgeoisie and the revolutionary "consciousness" given to it by intellectuals. Lenin admitted that the proletariat is potentially and instinctively revolutionary. Yet, these abilities remain purely potential until the intellectuals, bearers of consciousness and organization, translate them into reality.

What Is to Be Done? *and Marxism*

Undoubtedly, the theses of *What Is to Be Done?* clash with Marxism, or at least with the more mature works of Marx and Engels (from 1945 on). In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, Marx writes: "As the economists are the scientific representatives of the bourgeois class, so the Socialists and Communists are the theorists of the proletarian class. So long as the proletariat is not sufficiently developed to constitute itself as a class, so long as, in consequence, the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has not acquired a political character...these theorists are only utopians... *But as history develops and with it the struggle of the proletariat becomes more clearly defined, they have no longer any need to seek for such a science in their own minds, they have only to give an account of what passes before their eyes and to make of that their*

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medium."[30]

For Marx, therefore, the theoretician does not transform the proletariat from union members to revolutionaries, thus making a previously non-existent revolutionary situation into a revolutionary one.[31] Rather, he has the much more modest (although still important) function of clarifying the process of ongoing revolutionary struggles.

Again, in 1880, a few years before his death, Marx wrote: "only they themselves, and not any providential saviours, can aply vigorous remedies to the social miseries that afflict them."[32] Clearly, if he had held that the workers, left to themselves, were destined to remain slaves or, at most, to attain trade-union consciousness (which, without political struggle is certainly not a vigorous remedy even for Marx)[33] he could not have written these things and would have had to appeal to "providential saviours" (such as the intellectuals of *What Is to Be Done?*). At any rate, this phrase of Marx only corresponds to the notorious assertion contained at the beginning of the statues of the First International: "The emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself."[34]

Returning to *The Poverty of Philosophy*, where Marx deals with the development of the working class into a class "for-itself" (i.e., revolutionary class), one reads: "In the struggle, of which we have only noted some phases, this mass unites, it is constituted as a class for itself. The interests which it defends are the interests of its class. But the struggle between class and class is a political struggle."[35] Here Marx is referring to the experience of the English working class which, with the development of the trade unions and the Chartist political movement, was elevating itself to the level

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30. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (Chicago, n.d.), p. 136. Italics added.

31. On this point, see Lelio Basso, "Introduzione" to Rosa Luxemburg, *Scritti Politici* (Rome, 1967), p. 107. It is important to theoretically explain a movement in action and its ends since this, occasionally, can decisively facilitate its success. But no theory can create or transform a reformist movement into a revolutionary one. Revolutionary movements can be generated only by real conditions and not from theories. To turn Lenin upside down, "There is no revolutionary theory without a revolutionary movement." Thus, Marx writes: "As soon as it has risen up, a class in which the revolutionary interests of society are concentrated finds the content and the material for its revolutionary activity in its own situation: Foes to be laid low, measures dictated by the needs of the struggle to be taken; the consequences of its own deeds drive it on. It makes no theoretical inquiries into its own task." Karl Marx, "The Class Struggles in France," in Saul K. Padover, ed., *Karl Marx on Revolution* (New York, 1971), p. 162. Marx may be somewhat extreme here, since the function of theoreticians (even within the limits of the previously quoted passage from *The Poverty of Philosophy*) seems completely neglected. With its drastic tone, however, the passage reiterates how a revolutionary movement cannot be "created" by any theoretical investigation concerning the tasks of revolutionary classes.

32. Karl Marx, *Scritti Inediti di Economia Politica* (Rome, 1963), p. 189.

33. Karl Marx, *Wages, Price and Profit* (Peking, 1965), p. 74: "This very necessity of *general political action* affords the proof that in its merely economic action capital is the stronger side." Italics in original.

34. Karl Marx, "Statuti Generali dell'Associazione Internazionale degli Operai," in Marx-Engels, *Opere Scelte* (Rome, 1966), p. 763.

35. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy, op.cit.*, p. 189.

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of a "class for itself." This historical process occured outside the tutelage of bourgeois "socialist" intellectuals, and Marx himself noted how these intellectuals played a non-revolutionary role by inviting the working class (which, however, ignored them) not to become associated with parties and unions.[36]

Moreover, the English labor movement was not, at least until 1847, only an economic movement. In fact, Chartism (which had a powerful mass development) posed very precise political demands such as the full attainment of political rights and a completely democratic constitution (something highly revolutionary in the semi-aristocratic England of 1840) which cannot be subsumed under the Leninist concept of trade-unionist policy. For Lenin, in fact, the struggle for liberty and political rights in a country where they are lacking is a typically Social-Democratic struggle to the extent that, by fully acquiring political rights, the working class can unrelentingly develop its struggle.[37]

In his book on England, Engels evaluated the break between bourgeois elements and workers which occured in the English democratic movement as an expression of class-political positions acquired by the proletariat independently of the bourgeoisie. As for the hoped-for fusion of Chartism with socialism, he maintains that this was not going to come about through the action of an intellectual elite external to the working class: "It cannot be long before Chartism moves towards Socialism. This is particularly likely to happen during the next commercial crisis in England. In view of the present prosperity of manufacturers and commerce the latest date at which this crisis may be expected is the year 1847. Indeed it will probably strike the economy next year [1846]. The magnitude and fury of this crisis will be far greater than that of any former business depression. When it comes the workers will suffer so severely that they are certain to demand radical social remedies rather than purely political measures and it is a foregone conclusion that the workers will then get their Charter. But at the moment the workers are by no means clear in their own minds as to what they can achieve once the Charter has been accepted, and it will be absolutely necessary for them to devote a great deal of thought to this matter so that they will know to what use to put political power when they achieve it."[38]

Here Engels could be charged with a certain mechanical optimism. But he recognized Chartism's independence from the bourgeoisie and looked forward to its fusion with socialism.[39] Such a fusion, however, was not seen

36. *Ibid.*, p. 187: "The socialists desire the workers to leave the old society in order to be the better able to enter into the new society which they have prepared with so much foresight."

37. Lenin, "Explanation of the Program," in *Collected Works*, vol. II, pp. 98-122. This point is also made many more times on different occasions.

38. Frederick Engels, *The Conditions of the Working Class in England* (Oxford, 1971), p. 268.

39. It should be pointed out, however, that the fusion of Chartists and socialists was not seen *a la* Lenin, i.e., socialists = revolutionary theoreticians and Chartists = trade-unionist

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as a result of the actions of an elite outside of the proletariat (which, according to Engels, already with Chartism had been politically independent of the bourgeoisie) but as a result of the development of events. Thus, the 1847 crisis should lead workers to clarify for themselves the social use (subversive) of the attained political rights and, therefore, to determine the confluence of Chartism and socialism on a common revolutionary base. Engels admitted that socialist agitation had had some influence on the Chartists. But this is no doubt a secondary matter if in fact "the Socialists are mild-mannered and entirely law-abiding. They accept existing conditions, however bad they may be, and refuse to countenance any other method of reform save that of the peaceful persuasion of public opinion. In fact, however, the public will never be convinced by the Socialist arguments, which are at present presented in far too abstract a form."[40] As we have seen, two years later Marx praised the decision of English workers to reject the socialists' utopian suggestions and to begin the real class struggle. In his writings on the class struggle in France, the proletariat's autonomous and spontaneous revolutionary ability is seen as unfolding without any centralized or external direction.[41]

All of this contrasts with Lenin's assertions that the masses, lacking the external direction of intellectuals who are to bring consciousness and organization to them, cannot go beyond trade-unionism and the economic struggle.

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labor movement. Rather, it was seen as the fusion of two groups of a political movement whose objective goal was the overturning of the English capitalist structure. As already indicated, for Engels the Chartists were already beyond the boundaries of bourgeois politics since their demands would have caused an authentic political revolution in England as a prelude to a social one. As for the socialists, far from being authentic carriers of revolutionary theory, for Engels they were sick from intellectualism and utopianism. They could become revolutionary and overcome their crassness only through direct contact with the labor movement.

40. Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, *op.cit.*, p. 269.

41. Marx, "The Class Struggles in France," *op.cit.*, p. 173: "It is well known how the workers, with unexampled bravery and ingenuity, without leaders, without a common plan, without means and, for the most part, lacking weapons, held in check for five days the army, the Mobile Guard, the Paris National Guard, and the National Guard that streamed in from the provinces..." "It was a fight for the preservation or annihilation of the bourgeois order." Here we should clarify that we do not dispute the importance of organization, consciousness or vangard. What we want to make clear is this: (a) left to themselves, the masses do not necessarily remain in trade-unionism since they very often attain a revolutionary "spontaneity"; (b) consciousness and organization can only come about within the class struggle and cannot be ideologically imported from without; (c) the vangard is in turn internal and not external to the class, and cannot a priori institutionalize itself into the sole depository of consciousness through some historical law. Generally, it has a higher level of consciousness than the masses, but it does not monopolize it and, above all, it is not infallible; (d) consequently, the real revolutionary vangard is that group which in a determinate historical moment succeeds at pointing out the proper line to the masses and winning them over (without evident compulsion or concealed manipulation) and likewise corrects its own errors in light of the masses' own indications.

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The Logical and Historical Inconsistencies of What Is to Be Done?

Interest for Marxism began to develop in the Tsarist empire around 1870. The reasons for this are not to be sought in the inevitable development of "pure" thought sheltered in the heads of intellectuals, but in events like the Paris Commune which had a profound impression in Russia because of determinate internal historical conditions. These conditions were the result of the first capitalist structures (even though not yet the dominant ones) in the Russian economy and of the first struggles of the nascent proletariat. [42] Even if somewhat late, Russia was entering Europe's path of class struggle between bourgeoisie and proletariat.

It is this interaction of historical and social factors connected to Russian reality that roused interest in Marxism as the theoretical expression and consequence of the international proletariat's revolutionary class struggle. This is why during those years there was an intense correspondence between Marx and Engels on the one hand and Russian intellectuals on the other. The recurrent theme in this correspondence is generally the same: will Russia follow the western path? Many intellectuals and workers were beginning to give an affirmative answer to such a question and Marxism began to spread in Russia.

Therefore, even in Russia the spreading of Marxism was due to specific material and socio-historical factors and not to a natural and inevitable conceptual development. But something else remains unexplained in *What Is to Be Done?*: why the intellectuals, having elaborated proletarian class consciousness, present it to the proletariat. Kautsky said that this change of consciousness occurs when the objective conditions permit it (what clarity!) and Lenin bypassed the problem by simply quoting Kautsky. Marx and Engels examined the phenomenon of the passage of bourgeois ideology to the proletariat in a very different manner: "Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decision hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class—in fact, within the whole range of old society—assumes such a violent, glaring character that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift, and joining the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, therefore, at an earlier period, a section of the nobility went over to the bourgeoisie, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movements as a whole." [43] Marx and Engels' argument is very clear: there are some ideologists which in a situation of revolutionary crisis (caused by the proletariat's pressure) become aware of

42. On this, see Umberto Cerroni, *Le Origini del Socialismo in Russia* (Rome, 1965), pp. 72-86.

43. Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party," in Padover, *op.cit.*, pp. 88-89.

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being part of a "lost" class and go over to the side of the progressive class. This is all.

A similar process of social mobility cannot be explained through a "trade-unionist" struggle. Marx knew very well that this type of struggle does not generate revolutionary crises and, from this viewpoint, the essential character of the political party is present throughout the *Manifesto*. Clearly, when the class struggle reaches its climax and the old society breaks down in a harsh and violent manner, it can only be a moment of the proletariat's already politically revolutionary challenge, as can be seen from the reference to the historical struggle between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. This is subsequently proved by what Marx had said the year before concerning revolutionary theoreticians (whether of bourgeois or proletarian origin). They only record the revolutionary movement taking place outside their heads.

Marx's and Engels' way of posing the problem is the only one consistent with the principles of historical materialism, even if the *Manifesto's* model has to be adapted to individual historical situations. Thus, in Russia the passage of some intellectuals from the side of the bourgeoisie to that of the proletariat did occur, at least in its initial phase, through the Russian proletariat's unbearable pressure (in 1870 class struggles were only in an initial phase). Rather, it was a result of the European proletariat's revolutionary example (First International, the Paris Commune). It showed them, who were becoming aware of the inevitable development of capitalism in Russia, how even there (in Russia) the future belonged to the proletariat. Even in this case, therefore, theory developed in relation to an existing historical, political and revolutionary movement, and not as a consequence of natural and inevitable conceptual development.

Returning now to Lenin and Kautsky, we ramble about in darkness: on the one hand there is a class (the proletariat) which left to itself is incapable of any revolutionary action (only trade-unionism), while on the other hand there is the bourgeoisie which, not challenged in a revolutionary manner, is more firmly than ever in power. At this point some bourgeois ideologists leave their own class and bring revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat: Lenin does not tell us how or why this process comes about. The most intelligent sectors of the bourgeoisie destroy their own class (and their own privileges) by means of the proletariat which they transform from an inert and only instinctively and potentially destructive mass into a band of revolutionaries.

Furthermore, unlike Marx and Engels, Lenin maintains that the intellectual does not "join" the proletariat. Rather, it is the worker who, in exceptional situations, leaves his class by joining the party in a "political" way, i.e., as an intellectual. The proletariat's class struggle is to be directed by elements which have detached themselves from the bourgeoisie without, however, joining the proletariat. On this point Lenin's and Kautsky's theses

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seem to anticipate Karl Mannheim's utopian formulation according to which in society there is an independent social group (the intellectuals) fulfilling the edifying function of being spokesmen for the suffering humanity, Truth, and Justice.

The vulgar idealism of these positions is so evident that it is unnecessary to argue against them. What is strange is that, while certain "Marxists" fiercely attack Mannheim's theses, they still regard *What Is to Be Done?* as a highly scientific work. On the other hand, the history of the labor movement abounds with examples which repudiate the theses of *What Is to Be Done?*

We have already mentioned the experiences of the Chartist movement and the events of 1848-49 in France. In more recent history, three years after *What Is to Be Done?* the Russian labor movement demonstrated its autonomous revolutionary ability with the experience of the Soviets. In fact, initially the Bolsheviks were extraneous and hostile to this spontaneously mass-generated phenomenon.[44] Similarly, part of the masses was no doubt extraneous to the (even indirect) influence of Social-Democracy. And even the Bolshevik workers who joined them did so "in a personal role," given the party's hostile attitude toward the Soviets. These obviously revolutionary organs were the work of the masses who showed the party the revolutionary way.[45]

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44. There is no doubt about the spontaneous nature of the Soviets. Cf. Broné, *op.cit.*, pp. 84 ff.; Schlesinger, *op.cit.*, pp. 69 ff.; Leon Trotsky, *1905* (New York, 1971); E.H. Carr, *The October Revolution* (New York, 1969); Volin, *La Rivoluzione Sconosciuta* (Naples, 1950), pp. 33 ff.; Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed* (New York, 1954); various authors, *Lenin, op.cit.* As we shall see, Lenin himself admitted the spontaneous character of the Soviets.

45. In a letter to *Novaia Zhizhn* ("Our Tasks and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies," in *Collected Works*, vol. X, pp. 20 ff.) Lenin maintained that these organs were created by the entire proletariat, even those members of it who were not Social-Democrat (although this latter group was seen as a minority). Here Lenin seeks to make an unpleasant fact more acceptable to his comrades since Social-Democrats were very few, and half of them were Mensheviks. As for sympathizers, it is clear that the Bolsheviks were, for a long period, in a marginal position within the Soviets (except in Moscow). As is well known, this happened again in the 1917 revolution (at least in the first months of the Soviet experience)—an obvious sign that during their first phase they were not the leaders. On the contrary, the Bolsheviks joined them when the Soviets were already at the height of their power. At any rate, it is significant that here Lenin recognized even in the non-Social-Democratic proletariat (according to him, the minority) the merit of having spontaneously created a revolutionary organ without the mediation of a party. Thus, the effort of the ultra-Bolshevik historian Schlesinger turns out to be a sham in claiming that the Bolsheviks were the true leaders of the Soviets (whereas they were latecomers and continued to play a secondary role even during the first months of 1917) and that in the same pages (*op.cit.*, pp. 68-69) he restates the Soviets' independence from both the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks concerning the basic question of the eight hour law. Nor is this Schlesinger's only contradiction. He does his best to underemphasize the Soviets' role by saying that they were organizations meant to attain economic improvements. On the other hand, still in the same page, he points out—in passing—that they had a militia directed by a revolutionary military committee whose intentions were indicated by its title. As a kind of trade-unionism it was entirely peculiar! For his part, Lenin held, in April 1917, that it was necessary to keep the slogan "all power to the Soviets" even if the Bolsheviks were decisively a minority in them. Only in June 1917 did the Bolsheviks gain a majority in the workers' section

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The same happened with the Spanish workers' and peasants' councils in 1936 which came about outside of the influence of any revolutionary direction.[46] The same can be said for the masses of Chinese workers and peasants. In 1926-27, they pointed out the way towards a possible victorious revolution in contrast to the party's practice of subordinating itself to the Kuomintang since, from the very beginning, the Chinese Communist Party had been under the Third International's guidance.[47] The same can also be said of the French events in 1936 and 1968, where the "revolutionary" directions of the parties have so beautifully proved themselves before the masses' "trade-unionism."[48]

The Social-Democratic Polemics Concerning What Is to Be Done?

Initially, Lenin's book did not provoke major polemics, at least within the context of the *Iskra* group. Nevertheless, the split between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks began to take shape in the 1903 Second Russian Social-Democratic Congress. Seemingly inspired by insignificant technical questions, the split actually reflected different views about the party within the *Iskra* group. Although the whole group sought to defeat economism and to advocate the rapid organization of a genuine political party (which had existed only on paper since 1898), part of the *Iskra* group had as a model the western Social-Democratic mass parties which were particularly fit for parliamentary and electoral struggles. In a nutshell, this group wanted to prepare for post-absolutism and the parliamentary and electoral struggles which would follow. Lenin's elitist and revolutionary perspective was contraposed to this legal parliamentary view (Martov). After the split, the Mensheviks related its causes to the theoretical positions of *What Is to Be Done?* These had not been originally attacked since they coincided with the Mensheviks' goal of defeating the economists.

After the split Lenin's position became increasingly more difficult: his majority was very narrow and most of the party's leaders (Martov, Petrosev, V. Zasulich, Axelrod, the young Trotsky and also Plekhanov) were against him. Kautsky, from whom Lenin had expected aid (had he not in *What Is*

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of the Petrograd Soviet which was at that time the center of the revolution. Yet, they remained a minority within the whole Soviet. In less important centers the shift in their favor was even slower. Cf. Leon Trotsky, *History of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Ann Arbor, 1957).

46. Cf. Broné and Termine, *La Rivoluzione e la Guerra di Spagna* (Milan, 1962), pp. 126 ff.; and Karl Korsch, "La collettivizzazione in Spagna," in *Giovane Critica*, no. 20, pp. 81 ff.

47. Cf. Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution (1925-1927)* (Stanford, 1951).

48. For the 1968 events in France we share the theses of Sergio Bologna and Giairo Daghini, "Maggio '68 in Francia," in *Quaderni Piacentini*, no. 35, pp. 2 ff. The same argument is further developed by Massimo Cacciari, "La Comune di Maggio," in *Contropiano*, no. 2, 1968, pp. 455 ff. Cf. also Leo Huberman and Paul Sweezy, "Reflections on the French Upheaval," in *Monthly Review*, vol. 20, no. 4. Concerning the events of 1936, see Guerin's excellent book, *Front Populaire, Revolution Manque* (Paris, 1963.

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to Be Done? referred precisely to the German's views?) not only opposed him, but also refused to publish Lenin's reply to Luxemburg,[49] who had vigorously attacked Lenin. As Lenin was to bitterly recognize in a letter written in 1905,[50] all of international Social-Democracy was essentially with the Mensheviks. In such a situation, under continuous attack, it made sense for Lenin to reel back and tone down his theses which had uncovered a hornet's nest and put him in an extremely difficult situation.

In 1904, in replying to Axelrod's attack which reproached him by pointing out to him what a treacherous social group the bourgeois intellectuals were, Lenin answered that of course that was true. That was the reason why the party's bureaucratic centralization was necessary: to keep these treacherous elements under the control of the proletariat which, however, has already been accustomed to centralization by factory life.[51] In this context the party is no longer seen as a band of intellectuals guiding the proletariat but as the very vangard of the proletariat struggling against the bureaucratism[52] of crypto-anarchist petty bourgeois intellectuals no longer seen as the proletariat's saviours but as treacherous and extraneous elements.[53]

At this point Rosa Luxemburg entered into the polemic by accusing Lenin of bureaucratic centralism and paternalism towards the masses: "The conditions of Social-Democratic action are radically different. This action grows historically out of the elementary class struggle. It thus moves in the dialectical contradiction that here the proletarian army is first recruited in the struggle itself, and too, only in the struggle does it become aware of the objectives of the struggle. Here, organization, enlightenment, and struggle are not separate mechanically, but also temporally, different moments, as in the case with a Blanquist movement. Here, they are only different sides of the same process."[54] Clearly, Luxemburg's position is not

49. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Reply to Rosa Luxemburg," in *Collected Works*, vol. VII, pp. 474 ff.

50. Lenin, "Letter to Krasikov," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXXIV, pp. 338-341. In this letter Lenin also bemoans Kautsky's "infamous" attitude.

51. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," *op.cit.*, pp. 391-392.

52. *Ibid.*, pp. 430 ff. Here Lenin uses the term "bureaucratism" in a metaphorical sense. What he actually means is that a very centralized organizational structure based on a strong bond of formal discipline is typical of Social-Democracy. Later, however, within new historical conditions, Lenin himself recognized the need to give the party greater elasticity. This implies that the formal ultra-centralization is not the typical form of Social-Democracy but only one of its possible forms. The organization must conform to the historical process, as Rosa Luxemburg argued and to whose theses Lenin would move increasingly closer by recognizing in the 1905-06 period the transitory and relative character of the Social-Democratic organization. Cf. Paul Frolich, *Rosa Luxemburg* (Paris, 1965).

53. Here we find Lenin returning to his 1907 opinion concerning intellectuals. It should be pointed out, however, that as Luxemburg was to notice, in this work too the organization was seen as a rigid reality which readily flows into the labor struggles without posing the problem of adaptation to it and to the needs of the masses—which entailed the dangers that Luxemburg was to point out.

54. Rosa Luxemburg, "Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy," in Dick Howard, ed., *Selected Political Writings of Rosa Luxemburg* (New York, 1971), p. 289.

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only in accordance with Marx's and Engels' views (at least in the sense that theory is born within the process of the labor struggle and spreads in relation to it), but also with historical experience.[55]

Her critique of Lenin is correct, along with her comparing of Lenin to Blanqui. Lenin differs from the great French revolutionary because he holds that the party must be in constant contact with the masses (although this contact is rather paternalistic in *What Is to Be Done?*). But the two thinkers agreed on one thing: in considering consciousness and organization as temporally preceding the masses' struggle, into which they readily flow. Lenin's reply to Luxemburg's attack is embarassed and perplexed. He did not face the questions of principle posed by Luxemburg, and defended himself from the accusation of Blanquism by dealing with technical questions and marginal problems in the life of Russian Social-Democracy. Now, if we take into account the fact that in his polemic with Axelrod, Lenin had already essentially backed down a few steps concerning the problem of external consicousness and the "intellectualistic" character of the party, his silence here is symptomatic: he no longer wanted to openly defend the extreme theses of *What Is to Be Done?*

Furthermore, revising the emphasis of his previous arguments against Axelrod, Lenin no longer defended even bureaucratism as a proper organic form of Social Democracy, but tried to demonstrate how it is not entirely true that in the party the central committee has absolute and bureaucratic predominance over the local committees and the congress.

Yet, Lenin had previously clearly emphasized the rule of "ten strong heads," to whose detailed orders local committees must yield. Moreover, he had stressed the "very relative" character of democracy in proletarian organizations even in countries which, unlike Russia, were non-autocratic.[56] Clearly, here he attempts to correct the aim. Again: in July 1905, Lenin wrote *Two Tactics*, one of his better known works. In the last pages of this work he took up the problem of the relationship between the leader and the masses in the period of revolution and claimed that the task of the leader consists in clearing the way for "The spontaneous revolutionary activity of the masses."[57] The phrase "spontaneous revolutionary activity of the masses," would be unthinkable in the context of *What Is to Be Done?*:

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55. It should be pointed out, however, that Luxemburg often seems to hold (as Lukács has emphasized) that just as the historical process creates problems, it also "organically" creates solutions—which is a mechanistic view. Furthermore, the movement does not simultaneously develop with theory, but precedes it in time (the Soviets are a typical case here) so that theory is a little out of joint with respect to the beginnings of the movement (and the social being that determines consciousness). In a nutshell, for us theory is born in the movement (shortly after its beginnings) and so does the organization (whereas, even for Lenin, theory precedes the movement and joins it ready-made).

56. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?" *op.cit.*, pp. 473-482.

57. Lenin, "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution," in *Collected Works*, vol. IX, pp. 17-140.

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spontaneous activity could only be trade-unionist. Faced with the autonomous revolutionary creativity of the masses in Russia after January-February 1905, it would have been an error, or perhaps madness, to continue to uphold the theses of 1902. Lenin began to realize this, even if his "turn" was initially only disorganized and implicit. Moreover, there was a continual growth of the masses' spontaneous pressure: in October the first Soviets appeared, but the Bolsheviks did not participate in them since they were party-less mass organisms. Lenin was then in Stockholm, where he only received fragmentary news of the Soviet phenomenon. From his Swedish exile he wrote to the Bolshevik newspaper *Novaja Zhizn* to have the party and the Bolshevik fraction join the Soviets: this is the turn.

1905 and Lenin's Turn

Lenin was perfectly aware of the novelty of his theses. In fact, twice he warns the Bolshevik readers in the first part of the quoted letter that his theses would no doubt provoke amazement,[58] yet he had to outline his ideas in full. Moreover, in the same place he noted in passing that *What Is to Be Done?* had been written in a historical moment already radically changed (Lenin was to return to this point in 1907). Proceeding from that, Lenin explained that in his opinion, although created spontaneously by the whole proletariat (a part of which was not influenced by Social-Democracy), the Soviets were revolutionary organs and, consequently, no less necessary than the party. The proletariat, by itself, had gone much further than trade-unionism. In fact, he saw the Soviets as the embryo of the provisional revolutionary government. It would have been absurd to demand that these organs comply a priori with the principles of Social-Democracy. Rather, the latter must comply with the Soviets, trying in that context to carry forward its own theses in a continuous dialectic with the other revolutionary components to which the Soviets must be open. Thus, Lenin concludes: "We do not shut ourselves off from the revolutionary people but submit to their judgment every step and every decision we take. We rely fully and solely on the free initiative of the working masses themselves."[59] In these theses there is nothing left of the old views of *What Is to Be Done?*. Furthermore, Lenin cautioned that his new views were perhaps too rash (since they were based on second-hand information) and left it up to the editors to decide whether or not to publish his letter.

The Bolshevik paper, which had taken a stand in line with *What Is to Be Done?* and, as such, against participation in the Soviets (to the extent they were spontaneous and party-less organs) did not publish the letter, which came to light only in 1940. Nevertheless, it had an impact, since the

58. Lenin, "Our Tasks and the Soviet of Workers' Deputies," *op.cit.*
59. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

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Bolshevik faction finally accepted the Leninist directive. As for Lenin, in the course of 1906 and 1907 he reiterated the revolutionary character of Soviet organizations, along with the ability of the masses to spontaneously rise to a revolutionary level. In judging the Soviet experience in 1906 he wrote: "It was not some theory, not appeals on the part of someone, or tactics invented by someone, not party doctrine, but the force of circumstances that led these non-party mass organs to realize the need for an uprising and transformed them into organs of an uprising."[60] Thus, the force of events had been understood by the masses without the mediation of any party: the Soviets were the (spontaneously developed) organs of the revolutionary insurrection against autocracy.

Two months later Lenin repeated such a judgment: "Over the heads of the organizations, the mass proletarian struggle developed from a strike to an uprising. This is the greatest historical gain the Russian revolution achieved in December 1905; and like all preceding gains it was purchased at the price of enormous sacrifices. The movement was raised from a general political strike to a higher stage." And further on: "In December, we, the leaders of the Social-Democratic proletariat, were like a commander-in-chief who has deployed his troops in such an absurd way that most of them took no active part in the battle. The masses of the workers demanded, but failed to receive, instructions for resolute mass action."[61] Here we have a clean break between what in *Two Tactics* is defined as the spontaneous revolutionary activity of the masses and the ignorance of direction: what was missing certainly was not spontaneous revolutionary mass activity, but direction. In other words, whereas in *What Is to Be Done?* it is the direction that shows the way of revolution to the spontaneously trade-unionist masses, here (both objectively as well as in Lenin's judgment) the spontaneously revolutionary masses point the way of revolution to the leaders who, expecting nothing but trade-unionism, fail to rise to the occasion.

In a nutshell, under the powerful stimulus of the Russian events of 1905-06, Lenin undertook a radical rethinking. The basic elements of his new position are: (a) the party does not monopolize the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, who have their own autonomous revolutionary ability independently of the party's external intervention (in fact, in some cases such as with the Soviets, the masses lead the party). As a rule, there is only a difference of levels of consciousness between the party and the masses; (b) consequently the Soviets, party-less and "spontaneous" organs,

60. Lenin, "The Dissolution of the Duma and the Tasks of the Proletariat," in *Collected Works*, vol. XI, p. 125. In the very next page, he writes: "No Party organization will 'arm' the masses. On the contrary, the organization of the masses into light, mobile fighting units will, when things begin to move, render a great service in regard to procuring arms." This was written July 1906.

61. Lenin, "Lessons of the Moscow Uprising," in *Collected Works*, vol. XI, pp. 172-173.

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are no less important than the party and are the embryo of the new revolutionary power. Social-Democracy must adhere to them without excluding other revolutionary components or expecting the Soviets to accept in principle Social-Democracy: (c) in the Soviets the party cannot bureaucratically trample over the masses, but must accept a free dialectic, continually subject itself to the masses' judgment, and base itself on the workers' free initiatives.[62]

At the same time, there is also a change in Lenin's attitude toward the economic struggle which, at least in revolutionary periods, is recognized as the fundamental and determining element for the acquisition of class consciousness.[63] There are changes also concerning the organization and internal composition of the party: now Lenin defends an elastic and democratic structure in it,[64] and seeks a massive influx of workers into its ranks in order to transform gray intellectual schemes into concrete life.[65] Finally, Lenin hoped that for every intellectual in Party committees there would be at least several hundred workers.[66] Clearly, it was a radical turn at all levels: theoretical, political, syndicalist and organizational.

The Result of Lenin's Turn: The Substantial Retraction of the Theses of What Is to Be Done?

In 1907 the ebb of the unsuccessful revolution became quite obvious. During this period Lenin published a series of extremely interesting writings concerning the relationship between the vangard and the masses. First of all, as already indicated, between 1905 and 1906 there had been an organizational turn in the party clearly aiming at giving it a distinctly proletarian physiognomy and at transforming it from a narrow,

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62. In "What Is to Be Done?" those who appealed to the proletarians' callous hands against the authority of the leaders had been called demagogues.

63. Cf. Lenin, "Draft Resolutions for the Fifth Congress of the RSDLP," vol. XII, p. 142 where, concerning the great economic strikes, we read: "The whole history of the Russian revolution shows that the powerful upsurges of the revolutionary movement began only on the basis of such mass economic movements." Again in 1917, on the wake of a new revolutionary wave, Lenin cautiously reiterates the 1907 judgment holding that only "the struggle for immediate and direct improvement of conditions, is alone capable of rousing the most backward strata of the exploited masses, give them a real education and transform them—during a revolutionary period—into an army of political fighters within the space of a few months." Cf. Lenin, "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," in *Collected Works*, Vol. XIII, p. 242.

64. Lenin, "Twelve Years," in *Collected Works*, vol. XIII, p. 105.

65. Lenin, "On the Reorganization of the Party," in *Collected Works*, vol. X, p. 38. Clearly, here workers are seen as different from intellectuals, i.e., as proletarians in the full sense. In "What Is to Be Done?" on the other hand, there was only mention of intellectuals of working class origin separated from their class and equated with other intellectuals.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 36, note 2. Already at the Third Congress of Russian Social-Democracy (April 1905), held while the revolutionary surge was on the upswing in Russia, Lenin had indeed upheld the first proletarianization of the party, hoping that committees would consist of eight workers for every two intellectuals. The intellectuals did not appreciate this.

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conspiratory organization of professional revolutionaries into an organization strictly integrated with the class. This phenomenon was favored by several factors such as the weariness and the ebb of the revolution, which Lenin already detected on various occasions in 1907[67] and 1908.[68] In fact, during this period intellectuals of bourgeois origin left the party whereas real proletarian elements not only remained solidly anchored to it, but also grew in absolute number and in proportion. The untrustworthy and oscillating character of the petty bourgeois intellectuals was thus further exposed, and it contrasted sharply with the creativity of the proletarian masses of 1905-06 and with the emergence, even in a period of ebb, of new militant workers.

Lenin's work, *Twelve Years*, published towards the middle of 1907 as a preface to a collection of writings of the period 1895-1907, must be seen in this context. It is almost fully dedicated to *What Is to Be Done?*, with respect to which Lenin took a series of positions which clarified further and reiterated the turn of the preceding years: "The basic mistake made by those who now criticize *What Is to Be Done?* is to treat the pamphlet apart from its connection with the concrete historical situation of a definite, and now long past, period in the development of our Party... *What Is to Be Done?* is a *summary* of *Iskra* tactics and *Iskra* organizational policy in 1901 and 1902. Precisely a '*summary*', no more and no less."[69] And further on: "Nor at the Second Congress did I have any intention of elevating my own formulations, as given in *What Is to Be Done?*, to 'programmatic' level, constituting special principles."[70] Earlier on the same page Lenin had made it clear that the epoch of narrow and sectarian circles was over and, even from an organizational viewpoint, another epoch of a democratic-proletarian character had begun.

In a nutshell, besides admitting to occasionally have used "expressions ...formulated in a not completely fortunate or not completely precise manner" with regard to the relation between spontaneity and consciousness, Lenin sharply rejected that *What Is to Be Done?* gave a general theory of the party and of organization. It could not even be generalized in relation to the Russian experience, but was concerned with the tactics pursued by the more advanced Social-Democracy between 1901 and the revolution of 1905. Moreover, Lenin noted how, precisely in that work, even he had emphasized many times that organization makes sense only when there is "an objectively revolutionary class which spontaneously joined in the struggle." This class is "the working class whose best elements had created Social-Democracy." In this context the only positive role

67. Lenin, "Revolution and Counter-revolution," in *Collected Works*, vol. XIII, pp. 114 ff.
68. Lenin, "Letter to Ronsthein" (January 1908), in *Collected Works*, vol. XXXIV, pp. 375 ff. and "Letter to Gorki" (February 1908), *ibid.*, pp. 379 ff.
69. Lenin, "Twelve Years," in *Collected Works*, vol. XIII, pp. 101-102. Italics in original.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

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performed by the *Iskra* people was of centralizing the activity of the Social-Democratic circles through the constitution of a foreign center safe from the risks of Tsarist repression.[71]

But Lenin's own interpretation of *What Is to Be Done?* is not at all convincing: obviously, as already indicated, he had been influenced in this writing by a typically Russian situation. Yet, it is also beyond doubt that in *What Is to Be Done?* the need to defeat economism is justified at the level of their and of general principles. This need was so deeply felt during the period of struggle against revisionism in the defense of what was considered orthodoxy, that one could easily cross over from tactics to strategy and principles. It was not by chance that in *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin compared economism to revisionism, and justified his own position by quoting (in complete agreement) Kautsky, the official custodian of orthodoxy, who approached the same problem of the relation between spontaneity and consciousness not at the level of tactics or of the same particular Russian situation, but at the level of principles. In a nutshell, Lenin applied to the Russian situation Kautsky's general principles which he had accepted because they served him to shut down the "economists." Similarly, it is not true that in 1902, as Lenin wrote in 1907, he maintained that the party is created by the best part of the proletariat. Rather, in *What Is to Be Done?* he had found "profoundly correct" Kautsky's general claim according to which the theory and the organization of the Social-Democratic party, elaborated by intellectuals outside of the proletariat, introduced consciousness to the masses from without. What was different in Lenin was only the detail dealing with intellectuals of working class origins, who, however, were always considered as intellectuals and not as workers.

It seems that Lenin, between 1904 and 1907, because of the profound historical changes in the Russian class struggle (the rise of the Soviets) realized the fundamental untenability of the theses of *What Is to Be Done?* and the need to pull back. Nevertheless, because of internal party tactics (not giving in to the Mensheviks and to their accusations of "intellectualism") he was prevented from making an open revision of his theses. Thus, through a "clarificatory interpretation," he on the one hand reiterated the validity of the tactics put forth in *What Is to Be Done?* (which were originally supported without reservations even by the Mensheviks), while on the other he deprived that work of any general validity by relegating it to a completely surpassed phase in the history of Russian Social-Democracy. Yet, one thing is clear and extremely relevant: in 1907 Lenin was not inclined to uphold the theses of *What Is to Be Done?* as universally valid principles.

During this period he held some seemingly contradictory views concerning the relation between the vangard and the masses. In fact, in

71. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

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polemic with the Mensheviks, he reiterated that only the Social-Democratic proletariat was truly class-conscious[72] (this is a dangerous position, even if not altogether identical to that of *What Is to Be Done?*, since he does not mention "external" consciousness). Nevertheless, seen in the context of a polemic against a certain pathological cult of the working class on the part of the Mensheviks, such an assertion was only a customary polemical barrage on Lenin's part. In fact, in the following article, which developed and concluded the polemic, he gave a comprehensive appraisal of the Soviet experience, understood as the experience of the revolutionary organs of the "whole" proletariat, which repeated his 1905 judgment and already anticipated at least in part the words of 1917 "all power to the Soviets:" "The Soviets of Workers' Deputies and similar institutions were *actually* organs of the insurrection... Only when the insurrection developed, was their inception no mere bagatelle, but a great exploit of the proletariat. In the event of a new upsurge of the struggle, in the event of its transition to *that phase*, such institutions, of course, are inevitable and desirable. But their historical development must...consist...in the conversion of embryonic organs of revolutionary power (for the Soviets of Workers' Deputies were such) *into central organs of revolutionary power, into a revolutionary provisional government.*"[73] There seem to have been no fundamental modifications in Lenin's thought during the period from 1907 to 1917 concerning the relationship between vangard and masses. In fact, he will no longer write in a systematic manner on the subject, nor will he again deal extensively with the Soviets.

In January 1917, on the even of the new revolutionary storm, he held a conference where he substantially reiterated the importance of the Soviets in the 1905 revolution (even if with some caution): "In the fire of battle, a peculiar mass organization was formed, the famous *Soviets of Workers' Deputies*, comprising delegates from all factories. In several cities these *Soviets of Workers' Deputies* began more and more to play the part of a provisional revolutionary government, the part of organs and leaders of the uprising."[74] Thus, the revolutionary character of the Soviets was reiterated by Lenin on the very eve of their reappearance.

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72. Lenin, "Intellectual Warriors against Domination by the Intelligentsia," in *Collected Works*, vol. XII, p. 317.
73. Lenin, "Angry Embarassment," in *Collected Works*, vol. XII, p. 322. Italics added in the last section.
74. Lenin, "Lecture on the 1905 Revolution," *op.cit.*, p. 248.

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Lenin in 1917: The Soviets and State and Revolution

A few weeks after the above mentioned conference, the Revolution, a result of the masses' spontaneous and unforeseen action,[75] overthrew the autocracy and the Soviets rose again. Lenin, who had fully grasped the enormous significance of the event, furiously showered the Bolsheviks with letters from his Swiss exile. In the second of these letters, while the Bolsheviks were a small minority in the Soviets, he launched the famous slogan: "All power to the Soviets."[76]

Evidently Lenin hoped that the party's influence in the Soviets would grow. But that could result only from its wisdom and political capacity to win over the Soviet masses. As in 1905, he did not ask that the Soviets accept in matters of principle the Bolsheviks' Social-Democratic program, and he maintained that all power must immediately pass to them without any institutional privilege being given to the party. In this context, the party was only an element in the Soviet system, and could gain weight and influence only by acquiring the free consensus of the masses—not by arrogating to itself the "historical right" of guiding and enlightening them.

In 1917 Lenin reiterated the fundamental revolutionary importance of the Soviets produced by the masses' creativity.[77] But the most important docu-

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75. On this, see Trotsky's splendid analysis in *History of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Ann Arbor, 1957) where he shows that the February revolution was unleashed from the base by groups that overcame the resistance of their own revolutionary organizations and that the initiative was spontaneously undertaken by a sector of the proletariat more exploited and oppressed than the rest: the textile workers. On February 23, no one, especially in revolutionary circles thought that the storm was near. The February revolution was perhaps the only spontaneous revolution that succeeded. Trotsky, it should be pointed out, sought to underplay the relevance of the movement's spontaneous character which he initially admitted while maintaining that without the revolutionary experience of 1905 and without the presence of Bolshevik revolutionary workers, February 1917 would have been unthinkable. In short, the party, through its militants, was held to have "indirectly" guided the masses. Trotsky, however, did not demonstrate the Bolsheviks' preeminence in the movement, and it is beyond doubt that there existed revolutionary elements brought to the mass struggle against autocracy also outside of the Bolsheviks (anarchists, social revolutionaries, non-Bolshevik Social-Democrats such as Trotsky himself). Moreover, a revolution is organized and directed by a party when there is a centralized organization which directs, determines, and plans the struggle, which in this case did not happen. If in those days there was any organization, it was not a centralized organization, but a local and sectional one (organized street by street, house by house): a non-institutional, fluid organization which left no traces and which, above all, was not under the hegemony of any party's program. If some Bolsheviks took part in this transitory group that organized the struggle locally, they did so privately and not as members of the party which, in those days, like other parties, was paralyzed and overtaken by events. In historical situations of this type the dominant element is obviously the (spontaneous) initiative from below and not the organization (which remains embryonic, sectional and fluid) and even less party-oriented. Phenomena of this type were not new: Marx had already indicated the spontaneous character of the 1848 revolution (cf. *Class Struggles in France, op.cit.*).

76. Lenin, "On the Task of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXIV, p. 23.

77. Formally, in 1917 the Mensheviks very impulsively took the initiative of reconstructing the Petrograd Soviet. Yet, it is clear that, given the situation, the masses would have recreated

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ment of 1917 is *State and Revolution*, where Lenin hypothesizes a dictatorship of the proletariat in which the party is given no privileged political position and the proletariat directly and continually nominates, revokes and controls those who are named to run the state (and are immediately responsible to it).[78] As is well known, in advancing this schema Lenin was explicitly inspired by the Paris Commune.

Although the real vangard of the proletariat (the Marxist sector) was absent from the experience of the Paris Commune, Marx and Engels did not hesitate a moment to recognize in it the first historical case of "proletarian dictatorship." Of course, they criticized the Commune's indecision and its lack of centralization which contributed to its tragic defeat. Nevertheless, it does not follow that they saw the solution of the problem of institutionalized domination in a party minority as the sole bearer of consciousness. For example, in a letter to Kugelmann, Marx maintained that the Central Committee dissolved itself too soon in favor of the Commune in the strict sense. Without doubt, the Central Committee was a more organized organ better adapted to the rapid decisions of a civil war. But it was certainly not the institutional expression of a single party which proclaims itself the vangard by historical right.[79] What Marx and Engels had hoped for was simply an organization which, while being the expression of all proletarian components, would still have the power of making rapid executive decisions required by the transitory regime during the civil war.

Lenin did not break with this approach and his predictions fully reiterate the scheme of the Paris Commune.[80] Furthermore, the September 17

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the Soviets that they had readily produced in 1905 and whose memory was certainly still alive. In fact, the idea of reconstituting the Soviets was spontaneously put forth by the workers themselves from the second day of the struggle (see Lisa Foa, "I Soviet e l'Ottobre," in *Il Manifesto*, 1970, no. 1, p. 57). Thus, the Mensheviks were acting under the masses' spontaneously generated thrust. The experiment of the Soviets rapidly grew under the thrust of the masses who saw in them their own revolutionary organism and gave them a non-Menshevik interpretation. Thus Lenin was correct when, in 1917, he reiterated that the masses' creativity had produced the Soviets (without which the future of the Russian revolution would have been desperate).

78. Lenin, "State and Revolution," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXV, pp. 381-492.

79. On this, see Lissagaray's *History of the Commune of 1871* (New York, 1968).

80. Recently, "State and Revolution" has been the object of a violent attack on the part of Guerin's *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice* (New York, 1970), pp. 86 ff., articulated substantially in three points: (a) Lenin allegedly identified the Commune with the "bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie"; (b) the fact that the process of dissolution of this state is slow does not set well with Lenin's "intentions"; (c) the Soviets, organs of proletarian democracy, according to the Leninist conception, should have been institutionally guided by the Bolshevik party. The first argument leaves one dumb-founded: in "State and Revolution" there is no definition of the proletarian dictatorship as the "bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie" and it is also well known that Lenin, in this very book, carried out a ferocious polemic with Kautsky who wanted to utilize the bourgeois state for proletarian ends. Instead, Lenin maintained that it is necessary to create a new functional state apparatus which follows the interests of the proletariat and which is inspired by the principles of the Commune. The second argument is even more fragile: the process of instituting the State comprises an entire

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slogan to the effect that "the Bolsheviks must take power" does not contradict our theses. In the letter where he launched this slogan, Lenin made it clear that by that time the Bolsheviks would be at the head of the Soviet apparatus, whose needs they interpreted: it is in this capacity that they had to take power. In this respect, there is no rupture but rather continuity with the April theses. The soviet is not seen here (nor will it be in the first phase of the dictatorship) as an instrument of the party.[81] Also, in the 1918 polemic with Kautsky the centrality of the Soviets (and not of the party) within the context of the dictatorship of the proletariat (still seen as dictatorship of the entire proletariat) is reiterated once again.[82]

At the beginning of 1919 Lenin reiterated once again the previously mentioned pivotal concepts in the extremely important speech to the Second Congress of Trade-Unions (January 1919): "But now, precisely now, especially after the political revolution, which has transformed power to the proletariat, the time has come for the trade unions, as the broadest organization of the proletariat on a class scale, to play a very great role, to take the center of the political stage, to become, in a sense, the chief political organ... This is why, when political power passed into the proletariat's hands the trade unions had increasingly to take on the task of builders of working-class politics, the task of people whose class organization was to replace the old, exploiting class after upsetting all the old traditions and prejudices of the old science which, in the words of one scholar, told the proletariat: 'You look after your economic affairs and the party of the bourgeoisie will look after politics'."[83] And again: "In this connection the trade-unions must give very serious thought to the profound and famous words of the founders of modern communism to the effect that *'the broader and deeper the revolution going on in society, the larger should be the number of people who make the revolution, who are its makers in the true sense of the word'*."[84] And further on: "The socialist revolution

historical epoch characterized by acute class-warfare (internally and internationally). In this context, the proletariat needs its own state: voluntaristic shortcuts are not permissible. As for the last remark, concerning the relation between the party and the Soviets, Guerin is guilty of reading Lenin of 1917 in terms of what Lenin wrote and did in 1919-1920 in an historical context profoundly different. In "State and Revolution" there is nothing that raises the Bolsheviks into an institutional vangard sanctioned by historical right: a privileged vangard separated from the masses in whose name it rules behind the screen of the Soviets. This is what actually happened and new theoretical positions emerged, but only in time and under the stimulus of new events.

81. For an opposite view see Lisa Foa, *op.cit.*, p. 60, which, however, seems to strain the flow of Lenin's argument. In fact, Lenin speaks of a Soviet apparatus for the seizure of power at a moment when the Bolsheviks were an integral part of it and had gained its leadership, i.e., we are very far from the "external" instrumentalization of the Soviets.

82. Lenin, "The Proletarian Dictatorship and the Renegade Kautsky," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXVIII, pp. 257 ff.

83. Lenin, "Report to the Second All-Russia Trade-Union Congress," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXVIII, pp. 418-419. It is noteworthy that this function of the unions had to unfold within the system of Soviets.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 419. Italics added.

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can be made only with the active and direct practical participation of tens of millions in state administration."[85]

From these passages it is clear that the party cannot and must not monopolize power and that an increase of power at the base becomes an immediate necessity. Otherwise, socialism cannot come about nor, therefore, can the proletarian dictatorship survive. Socialism can only come about through the active and direct participation of the masses in state decisions of which they must be "authors in the full sense." No institutionalized power is separated from the masses by a restricted vangard.

Of course, on the same occasion Lenin also says that: "The task is to teach the people the art of administration, not from books, not from lectures or meetings, but from practical experience, so that instead of just the vangard of the proletariat which has been set to command and organize, more and more fresh blood may enter the departments, and this new section may be reinforced by ten others like it."[86] However, it is clear that the power of this vangard (which is not necessarily only a party) expressed by the proletariat (and not external) is seen as wholly transitory which must begin at once to phase itself out (the rationalization of the trade-unions aimed precisely at this). Above all, it is not seen as a basic institutional power of the vangard, but deriving from a mandate of the masses. Thus, it was based on, and could exist, only with the consent and confidence of the masses.

On the other hand, this corresponded to the first phase of Soviet power: the masses freely conferred the power to rule to a few of those they had elected (Bolsheviks, for the most part) with an act of free choice which presupposed, in the dramatic historical conditions of 1917-1918, a high level of consciousness. Furthermore, it should be pointed out that, precisely in the quoted passage, Lenin noted that the only true form of political mass education is founded on the proletariat's increasingly more direct experience of power and not on books, meetings and more or less enlightened circulars by party functionaries.

It is undeniable, as bourgeois historians themselves readily admit, that after 1917 Lenin and the Bolsheviks did their best to implement the slogan "all power to the Soviets." Lenin's speech of early 1919 was the last great effort in this direction. We now know that that effort failed. This, however, is not to be attributed to Michels' law of the inevitability of bureaucratic sclerosis in political parties and collective organizations in general, as Carr maintains.[87] As long as the Soviets sunk their roots into a conscious proletariat they remained living and authentic organisms of proletarian dictatorship. As their mass base died out, they became bureaucratized. It

85. *Ibid.*, p. 426.
86. *Ibid.*
87. Cf. Carr, *op.cit.*

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was the failure of the Russian proletariat as a class that finally determined the failure of proletarian democracy.[88]

The Bureaucratic Turn of 1919-1920

In 1918 the first signs of a bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet revolution became apparent. This, however, should not have been surprising since it was to be expected that the old world, old habits, and old ways of thinking should try to poison the new rising world. These retrograde, "residual" tendencies, would certainly have been defeated if there had not been a series of events that reintroduced them once again. First of all, the foolish attitude of the Mensheviks and of the left Social-revolutionaries forced the Bolsheviks to take on by themselves, through a very hard struggle, the political direction of the proletariat. On the other hand, and this was much more serious, the trade-unions and the Soviets were becoming bureaucratized, thus eliminating the possibility of a real dialectic between party and class.

The reasons for this bureaucratic ossification are to be sought in the historical conditions within which the proletarian dictatorship operated in 1919-1920 and which became apparent already in the second half of 1918. The civil war and foreign intervention brought about a complete collapse of industrial production which, in 1920, was 13% of the pre-war period. Consequently, the extraordinary industrial proletariat of 1917 had almost completely disappeared sociologically and had been reduced to a few hundred thousand individuals exhausted by the civil war. Furthermore, the vangard elements of the proletariat either had died in the war or had been absorbed in the bureaucratic machinery and were separated from contact with the masses at the work places. The subsequent need to appeal to the functionaries and technicians of the old regime in order to develop or at least to sustain production injected a mass of corrupt elements, with their baggage of bourgeois customs and ambitions, into the vital centers of the state and of the economy.

In this situation it was impossible to rely on the prevalently semi-proletariat peasant masses: this was not due so much to their impermeability to socialism or to their treacherous natural character, but to the fact that in Russia Social-Democracy, weak and divided as it was, never had the strength to simultaneously hegemonize both city and country. Because of

88. We prefer this interpretation to the one put forth by Basso in his *Neocapitalismo e Sinistra Europea* (Bari, 1969), pp. 20 ff, according to which the bureaucratic degeneration was due to Russian backwardness and the consequent weakness of the proletariat. Actually, the Russian proletariat (which was at the time the most concentrated in the world) gave proof of its strength and maturity through the Soviet experience of 1905 and 1917 which put it at the vangard of the world proletariat. Nothing proves that the Russian proletariat, after 1917, had lost this exceptional ability until it was dispersed and liquidated.

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evident objective reasons, it developed decades after the peasant movement and remained isolated in the cities. Thus, it left the countryside to various populist movements which had already solidly established themselves there when Social-Democracy began to develop.

In the Russian situation the peasants were a mass extraneous to Socialism and profoundly influenced by decades of Narodnik and petty bourgeois propaganda, so that they could only be untrustworthy and oscillating allies of the urban proletariat, to be won over to socialism by slow, difficult and contradictory work over a long period of time. However, the process of bureaucratization proceeded in great strides, and the urban proletariat (exhausted at this point) could not take on such a task. Consequently, the party was separated for a long period from the enormous masses of peasants and could no longer be based on the weak and almost nonexistent urban proletariat: in other words, it remained isolated from the whole country. In a similar situation and amidst enormous economic and military difficulties the realization of a state modelled after the French Commune was truly impossible.

This is how it happened that, when the Russian working class rose, and because of its weight in society, was able to retake control, there already existed in Russia a solid and ossified bureaucratic regime. This state of affairs could be overcome only through a revolution in the West, which would liberate Russia from this unbearable situation by making it part of a European socialist federation. Historically, a revolutionary victory was possible in Europe. Because of a series of circumstances which cannot be dealt with here, however, it did not happen, and by 1921 the general ebb of the proletarian wave was evident in Europe too. This tragic situation, which was already becoming clear in 1918, grew increasingly worse in the course of the following year and influenced both the Bolshevik's positions and Lenin's thought.

The moment of the "theoretical" turn may be fixed two months after the Second Congress of Trade-Unions in January 1919. The situation deteriorated from day to day and in March 1919, during the VIIIth party congress, a resolution was approved which claimed that the Russian Communist Party had to gain exclusive political predominance in the Soviets and the practical control of all their work.

The theoretical justification for such a turn was in the fact that the Communist party, as the vangard, *must* institutionally direct the dictatorship of the proletariat. Actually, two conceptions of vangard may be distinguished. According to one, the vangard shows the masses the way (in a continuous dialectical relation with them and by taking into consideration their needs and indications which, often, can be more accurate than the central committee's opinions) and tries to convince them in case of disagreement, without imposing on them. According to the other, the vangard has the institutional and inalienable function of guiding the masses so that,

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if there is disagreement, it is the masses who must yield, willing or not, to the vangard's guidance.

For the Lenin of the 1905 letter to *Novaja Zhizn* or of *State and Revolution*, and generally for the Bolsheviks of 1917, the first vangard conception prevailed. During the VIIIth Congress, however, the second of these conceptions began to dominate, with all the inherent perils that it entailed. Specifically, the emphasis placed on guidance and on the exclusive and complete control of the proletarian dictatorship by the Communist Party may be justified only on the hypothesis that the vangard "by historical right" can always see sooner and better than the masses.

As for the 1919 party program, it again reiterated its adherence to the principles of the state modelled on the Paris Commune, which evidently were slow to die. But it is clear that in this historical context, when it was accepted that the Soviets should become a form of "guided democracy," such declarations of principles had no meaning whatsoever. Still in March 1919, Lenin noted with sorrow that the Soviets, meant to be the organs of the whole class, in fact "unnaturally" expressed the power of a restricted vangard.[89] Nevertheless, it was not long before the realization of an unpleasant but unavoidable state of affairs gave way, between 1919 and 1920, to a series of assertions which tended to "rationalize" that situation. If the Bolsheviks had not done this, i.e, if they had not recognized that the proletarian dictatorship in Russia was by then identified with their power, they would have had to recognize the validity of Social-Democratic criticisms, on the one hand, and anarchist ones on the other—with political consequences that can be well imagined.

Moreover, with the possible exception of Italy, a left-wing tendency which attacked the power of the leaders and was widely influenced by Luxemburg's thought, began to develop even within the Communist movement. Actually, it aimed rather at the bureaucratism and opportunism of those ex-Social-Democrats who formed the right-wing of the Communist movement. In fact, however, their criticisms hit also the Russian Communists. Thus, whereas these critical positions counted on Lenin's support, they ended up being rudely rejected by Lenin himself before and during the Second Congress.

Lenin wrote *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* in polemic with this left-wing (and, for various reasons, also against the Italian left). In this work, the extremely serious issues of left-wing communism were reduced to an "anarchist madness," while the need for a strong centralization of power in the guidance of the masses was reiterated with tones

89. On this, see Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (New York, 1968), p. 6, which cites this passage from Lenin: "The Soviets, which according to their program were organs of government *by the workers*, are in fact only organs of government *for the workers* by the most advanced sections of the proletariat, but not by the working masses themselves." Lewin's italics.

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reminiscent of the "ten strong heads" of *What Is to Be Done?*[90]

Actually, in order to refute Lenin's theses it suffices to remeber the anarchist Lenin of *State and Revolution* and of the speech to the Second Congress of Trade-Unionists which had emphasized, as has been indicated, the direct, continuous and massive participation of workers (with or without the party) in power, and the fact that no vangard (no able or strong head) can substitute this essential element in the construction of socialism.

As could be imagined, the polemic continued during the Second Congress of the International. There, when Tanner (German) and McLaine (English) asked about the nature of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin dryly answered that there was no doubt about its substantial coincidence with that of the party, since in the capitalist epoch only a minority of workers (those adhering to the party) could attain class consciousness.[91] Some years later Stalin noted that here Lenin had spoken of a substantial but not exclusive coincidence. It is clear, however, that "in substance" meant "what is essential and what really counts."

In such a context, the vangard's guiding power is not controlled or revocable by the masses. Recall and control imply consciousness, and if the truly conscious workers are only the Communists, as Lenin noted on this occasion, political power belongs only to them. In other words, the vangard runs the proletarian dictatorship because it has a monopoly of consciousness and not by virtue of the masses' choice. Similarly, it follows that in a similar context the Soviets, the trade-unions, etc., end up by becoming passive executive instruments (transmission belts) in the hands of the party which exercises the dictatorship.

Of course, Lenin did not reintroduce the theses of *What Is to Be Done?* concerning the "external" vangard and the function of the "intellectuals." Yet, to speak of an "internal" vangard which monopolizes consciousness, is to create a fracture which in the long run gradually changes into an "external" vangard.

Thus, a bureaucratic tendency developed during the second Congress which tended to present the Russian experience as a basic model to imitate by other parties and other communist currents, whose reservations were silenced with an apodictic and authoritarian style anticipating Stalin's era.[92] This internal bureaucratic degeneration also influenced the external relations with the other components of the Third International.

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90. Lenin, "Left-Wing Communism—An Infantile Disorder," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXXI, pp. 23 ff. See in particular pp. 44-45. The party is seen as "the hard core" of the proletariat struggling against petty-bourgeois infiltrations that threaten it from all sides. The proletarian masses are seen as extremely corruptible and held solely under the tutelage of an iron vangard which enjoys the trust of the "honest" part of the class.

91. Lenin, "Speech on the Role of the Communist Party," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXXI, pp. 235 ff. See also p. 191 where Lenin ambiguously remarks about the relationship between the party, the Soviets and the masses. Probably, it was this ambiguity that led to Tanner's and McLaine's questions and to Lenin's dry answer.

92. This is also what happened in relation to the Italian Left (Bordiga) which was certainly

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The Attempted Synthesis of the Last Years; The Struggle Against Bureaucracy

It does not follow, however, that the tendency towards bureaucratization was now fixed in a complete and definitive manner. The Bolsheviks were always leaders profoundly tied to the masses and to their destiny by decades of struggle. So, while on one hand they theorized the "dictatorship of the party," on the other they were concerned with the developing process of bureaucratization.

In other words, they generated the causes of certain phenomena, but the gravity of the bureaucratic effects which followed could not be readily accepted. Often, at least at first in transitional phases, certain premises were accepted and attempts were made to mitigate their "natural" effects. This is how Lenin, an able mediator of opposing tendencies, between 1921 and 1923 tried to stem the bureaucratic tide, without, however, questioning the principle under which they were operating: the dictatorship of the party.

In a nutshell, the problem was this: since the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the party were seen to be the same thing, it was necessary to find a real counterweight to the party's power to prevent it from becoming bureaucratized. This need, however, conflicted with its premise. An external counterweight internal to the proletariat and capable of restraining the process of bureaucratization could be brought about only by denying that the dictatorship of the proletariat was the same thing as that of the party. Furthermore, as already indicated, within the Russian framework, and in the absence of a revolution in the West, the bureaucratic process was irreversible. Thus, even an extremely able mediator such as Lenin had to run against an insuperable historical condition.

The most serious attempt to face the problem was made by Lenin in the article on trade-unions at the beginning of 1922. First of all, he reiterated the party's preeminence.[93] Therefore, he maintained that the trade-unions were transmission-mechanisms operating between the party and the masses. This famous expression, usually attributed to Stalin, was used for the first time by Lenin and marked a radical turn with respect to the speech of January 1919. Lenin also made it clear that the unions must defend the workers from their state's bureaucratic degenerations and become schools

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not opposed to ultra-centralism but objected to parliamentarism (even if revolutionary). Here we cannot deal with this in detail. Yet, those who are interested in re-examining the documents of that polemic (see "O Preparazione Revolutionaria o preparazione Elettorale," in *Documenti Raccolti dal Partito Comunista Internazionalista di Bordiga*, Milan, 1968, particularly pp. 36 ff) remain struck by the seriousness of Bordiga's arguments (to which Lenin, in *Left-Wing Communism*, certainly did not do justice) and by the authoritarianism, scholasticism and openly vacuous manner of Lenin's and the Bolsheviks' replies.

93. Lenin, "The Role and Functions of the Trade Unions under the New Economic Policy," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXXIII, p. 190: "The trade unions must collaborate closely and constantly with the government all the political and economic activities which are guided by the class-conscious vangard of the working class—the Communist Party."

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of communism. Yet, if what Lenin held in 1919 was true, i.e., that the masses are educated only in the direct and active management of power, by now maintaining that during the transitional phase the power belongs to the party, he has undergone a considerable involution.[94]

The task of struggling against the bureaucratization of the state remained. Although important, however, this could not be compared with the tasks outlined in 1919. Yet, to the extent that party and state[95] tended to overlap and the unions became more and more a transmission belt in the hands of the party (rather, the party-state), it no longer seems likely that they can fulfill such a function.

Lenin himself was aware of the contradiction and, in concluding the article, said that the unions' tasks were contradictory and it was necessary to find the moment of mediation between the phsae of the "transmission belt" and that of the struggle against bureaucratization in the state (which, rather, would seem to require a certain independence). How this is to be done, however, is not indicated, although Lenin mentioned recourse to the Third International in case of conflict. But by then even in the Third International the Bolsheviks' weight was preponderately such that the remedy was illusory. Furthermore, given the historical situation and the theoretical premises of the article, no concrete indications were possible. Thus, Lenin's article closed with an unresolved problem and with a question mark.

In the last years of his life Lenin was constantly preoccupied with the growth of the bureaucratic phenomenon. As Lewin points out,[96] however, he refused to analyze it in depth even though he had several excellent analytical tools such as Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire* which, with the necessary historical qualifications, could be applied to Russia between 1920

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94. *Ibid.*, pp. 190-191. Here Lenin dwells at length on the education of the masses understood in the technical sense (i.e., to learn certain notions). But they do not really participate in the building of the state economy (although Lenin said that they must participate) by solely raising their technical education. Concerning the power of union representatives in the central organs of the plan, their power remains that of collaborators in a State directed by the party in all economic and political matters.

95. If the unions were the transmission belts of the party, which in turn is the acme of state power, they inevitably became the transmission organs of the party-state's needs. In this context, the task of the struggle against bureaucracy appeared very difficult to carry out. It should be pointed out that our criticisms of Lenin deal with the relation between party and unions during the phase of the proletarian dictatorship, not during that of bourgeois domination when problems are very different. Regarding the proletarian dictatorship and the unions, the most advanced positions seem to be those that Lenin put forth during the Second Congress of Trade-Unions where he spoke of nationalization of unions (in a certain context and with certain functions) but not of transmission-belts. Lenin's speech to the Second Congress of Trade-Unions was not important because of the role that he wanted to assign to unions (their function and their permanence in a socialist society remain to be elaborated even if the bureaucratic thesis of the "transmission belt" is rejected), but because of the emphasis placed on the need for the masses to directly and actively participate in exercising power.

97. Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle, op.cit.*

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and 1929.[97] Yet, by following this path, one ran the risk of coming to the conclusion that proletarian power in Russia was agonizing and could not be revitalized without a world revolution (or at least a European one). Lenin saw all this and desperately counted on revolution in the West (or at least in the East, where he turned in his very last writing).[98] Thus, he struggled against the effects of bureaucracy, trying to restrain and mitigate them. Yet, he failed to fully develop an analysis whose conclusion could have been a declaration of "premature death" of Soviet power and of the October Revolution.

The last writings are indicative. The famous marginal note to the testament, with which he asked for Stalin's removal[99] since Stalin seemed to be among those responsible for the phenomenon, certainly could not change the course: Stalin was the agent of historical forces enormously more powerful than him. Someone else in his place may have had a less "oriental" and brutal style, but things would not have been substantially different. "Better Fewer, but Better," Lenin's last writing, dealt again with the problem. But it did so always at the level of effects and not of causes, especially when dealing with efficiency. In fact, Lenin seems to criticize the bureaucracy from within, by reproaching it for its excesses and abuses. But he no longer disputed the fact that there existed a bureaucratic power estranged from the masses and counterposed to them. Furthermore, in the same article, Lenin emphasized the need to merge the organs of state with those of the party whenever that may be justified by functionality. In conclusion, in his last years he operated in a tragic contradiction: to struggle against bureaucracy in a Russian context within which the struggle was a losing one, to theorize the identity between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the party while simultaneously recognizing that within this dictatorship the party and the state must find counterweights to prevent its degeneration. What this meant was that the party could not be generally identified with proletarian power and with the state (or better, with its directive organs).

Lenin's last word on the relation between vangard and masses during the phase of proletarian dictatorship remained an extremely tormented question mark.

Conclusions and Premises

Clearly, in the thought of Marx and Engels the problem of the passage from the class-in-itself to the class-for-itself (and therefore the problem of the relationship between vangard and masses) remains unsolved. At various

97. Such a periodizaton is a function of our conviction that only after that date did the bureaucracy become a genuine class in the U.S.S.R.

98. Lenin, "Better Fewer, but Better," in *Collected Works*, vol. XXXIII, pp. 487-502.

99. Cf. Lewin, *op.cit.*, pp. 84-86.

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points they took note of this process, but they described it at a phenomenological level without clarifying its interconnections.[100]

Lenin's thought on this point does not present *one*, but rather *a series* of complex and contradictory positions. Most "New Left" groups today call for a "return to Lenin." But to which Lenin? The "economist" Lenin of the early years; the "intellectualistic" Lenin of the period between 1899 and 1903; the Lenin of the period between 1905 and January 1919; the bureaucratic Lenin of 1919-1920, or the tormented Lenin of the last years? For us, the most authentic Lenin is that of the period between the two revolutions, the Lenin of the letter to *Novaja Zhizn*, of *State and Revolution*, of the speech to the Second Congress of the Trade-Unions: in other words, the Lenin who was the protagonist of two great revolutions. His greatness consists essentially in having understood the centrality of the Soviet phenomenon and of having "imposed" this line on the party in November 1905 and April 1917. The slogan "all power to the Soviets" (along with the positions of the period between 1905 and 1907) represents the overcoming of *What Is to Be Done?* and its intellectualism: it is the highest point of Lenin's revolutionary creativity.

If we seek an in-depth analysis of the genesis of the Soviets in Lenin, i.e., of the way in which large masses have given birth to this gigantic experience, of the slow molecular and underground process which eventually exploded on the surface in a qualitative leap, we remain disappointed. Even in Lenin, the problem of the relationship between vangard and masses remains unresolved, unless one returns, with an absurd dogmatism, to the idealistic theses of *What Is to Be Done?* which are superseded by history and relegated by Lenin himself to a transitory phase of Social-Democratic tactics. Thus, the "New Left" is not faced with problems of recovering or returning anywhere, but of autonomous elaboration. This work is only an historical introduction to the study of the relationship between the vangard and the masses. Yet, it is indispensable, since to do justice to an absurd Leninist dogmatism (in which Lenin usually is seen through Stalin's eyes) is one of the concrete ways of moving ahead.

100. This point has been greatly elaborated by the journal *Classe e Stato*. Cf. Stame's article, "Contraddizione e Rivoluzione," in *Classe e Stato*, no. 4, pp. 3 ff; and Salvati's "Il Capitalismo dei Monopoli," in *Classe e Stato*, no. 5, pp. 71 ff.

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Laing, Cooper and the Tension in Theory and Therapy

by Russell Jacoby

The inflation which is endemic to late capitalism does not exempt concepts and theories; if inflated money seeks to overcome the falling rate of profit, inflated concepts seek to overcome the falling rate of intelligence. Within left and radical thought this assumes a particular form: an increase in revolutionary face value. Today every theory is more revolutionary than the previous one, or so it claims. Such an increase is a response to a depreciation, as it were, in the critical substance and categories of the theories; as silver coins are now fabricated with copper, revolutionary theories are constructed with conformist and establishment concepts. The result is inflation. It if need be said, this development is not due to the cynicism of revolutionary thinkers, but the realities of bourgeois civilization.

R.D. Laing and David Cooper have not escaped this fate; their thought genuinely rings of political radicalism and revolutionary elan—and it drivels out into pop existentialism, positivism and mysticism. To the point that neither they nor their admirers seem to notice, it might not seem to matter. Yet it does matter; the radical critique of society is degraded into externals, against the inner drift of their own work. Over time this inner logic takes its toll, on Laing and Cooper, and their followers. The critique unable to sustain itself and hollowed of meaning, fronts for political passivity, establishment psychology, spiritualism, and so on.

The following thoughts intend neither to sum-up or write-off Laing and Cooper, but hope only to be suggestive. Their work itself is unfinished, and it is uncertain how they are to resolve the antinomies in which their thought is caught. Insofar as their work is incomplete so too are these remarks. In the following the term neo-Freudians refers to those such as Erich Fromm and Karen Horney who espoused a 'cultural' critique of Freud but retained in very diluted form Freudian concepts; the term post-Freudian is more inclusive—and inexact—incorporating those who outside of a Freudian framework, continue to reject—from various vantage points—behavioral psychology, e.g., Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, etc. They have built on a the work of the neo-Freudians, and in many ways share its logic and approach.

I

From the first, Laing and Cooper have repudiated the regressive principle of the post-Freudians—that of the discontinuum between health and sickness—and in doing so have returned to a Freudian position: the essential unity of psychic phenomena. Yet, this must be immediately

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qualified; in their most recent writings the disunity has been maintained in the reverse: the mad are sane and both are located in distinct camps. This in turn reformulates in the reverse the bad identity of therapy and theory that is the mark of the post-Freudians. The latter naively identify individual and group therapy with social change. Laing and Cooper, on the other hand, openly in opposition to society, in flipping over the conventional designations of health and abnormality, reproduce as a mirror image the same identification of therapy and social change. They tend to equate individual psychoses and madness with social liberation; they invest in the former what can only be reached by the latter. Hence the noticeable glorification of schizophrenia, especially in *Politics of Experience*, as a "natural healing process," and "existential rebirth."

Laing and Cooper succumb to unresolved and unconscious contradictions which they do not, like Freud, articulate;[1] rather, in presenting them as transcended they fall prey to them. We are told that schizophrenia is a "special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation."[2] Yet, the content of this unlivable reality is whittled down to that of interpersonal relations, especially the family; this was precisely the drift of the neo-Freudians; the social structure was adulterated to social friendship patterns. "There are no schizophrenics," Cooper tells us; and further, the conventional method of "abstraction" in which the schizophrenic is considered removed "from the system of relationships in which he is caught" distorts the problem.[3]

While there are enough statements designating the family as a mediating agency between society and the individual, in the main it is accepted as the cause of social oppression, and not also its victim. The critique of the process of abstraction—considering the schizophrenic in isolation—issues into another abstraction: the family as an insular group. What Marcuse wrote of therapy among the neo-Freudians can be reformulated for this context. That the family is abstracted from society in the name of therapy aimed at a schizophrenic embedded in the family is not questioned; this is a pragmatic decision to be discussed between specialists, i.e., when or where individual or family therapy is more productive. What is questioned is when this procedure of abstraction is promptly forgotten, and the family is considered society, and not also its damaged product. When family therapy is billed as social change the imperatives for social change itself disappear.

An either-or is posed here which Laing and Cooper—and "radical" therapists—shy away from, but which is not arbitrary; rather it is rooted in the social structure. The social and radical analysis suggests that the

1. I am in essential but not complete agreement with J.B. Gorden, "The Meta-Journey of R.D. Laing," in *R.D. Laing and Anti-Psychiatry*, ed. R. Boyers (New York, 1971).
2. R.D. Laing, *Politics of Experience* (London, 1969), p. 95.
3. D. Cooper, *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry* (New York, 1971), p. 35.

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individual designated mentally ill is ill not from personal defects; rather, the illness is a response to an "unlivable situation" that can be traced through the mediation of friends, family, jobs, and so on, to society. When loyal to this analysis, there can be no talk of therapy. More precisely: there can be talk of therapy, but therapy as therapy—not as radical therapy or social change. The therapy accepts for the sake of the individual victim the disjuncture between the *individual form* of the illness and its *social origin*. In this way therapy becomes self-conscious, adequate to its own notion; it does not mystify itself as radical cure or liberation while it responds to the emergency of the individual victim.

But one need not be loyal to the political and social analysis; it can be dropped for one that confuses interpersonal, family, and social analysis. Out of the confusion emerge possibilities of therapy as 'birth,' 'healing,' 'growth' that society precludes—if society were remembered. Rather it is forgotten by way of existential jargon or it is spiritualized away by a new religious ethos. The former participates in all the difficulties of theoryless and existential psychology. With Cooper, especially in *The Death of the Family*, a radical, individual, existential standpoint coexists with an equally radical communal one. Commitment to oneself is as evenly accentuated as commitment to the community; yet it is the very source of the evil that in bourgeois society the necessities of the individual and those of the collectivity diverge. To attain their identity in a free society presupposes the enunciation of their present antagonism. Cooper, however, unconscious of the contradiction, perpetuates it.

To follow him, insofar as the family violated the integrity of the individual, the duty of the individual is first toward him/her self. "The only way to compassionate involvement with others is the short cut of one's own liberation," Cooper writes, as if this were not the very jingle that bourgeois society monotonously plays.[4] The short cut of individual liberation cuts short the social liberation without which the individual is shunted into a dead-end street. Early in the book Cooper tells an 'existential' tale of a Japanese poet who chooses to pass by a small desolate abandoned child because responsibility toward himself and his journey is of greater importance. The moral of this tale? "The hardest lesson of all is to know what one has to do for oneself."[5] Such is the blank existentialism that fantasizes it is negating bourgeois society even as it heeds its first precept: to abandon the abandoned in the name of self-help first. Yet this is not the whole of Cooper; existential individualism vies with a communal and collective ethos. The contradiction is not merely Cooper's; it is one of an unfree society. Yet the point is not to lose it in the flurry, but to find it and say it. To pretend that one is the other is to promote the myth that personal

4. D. Cooper, *Death of the Family* (New York, 1971), p. 60.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

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liberation is either personal or liberation. The only "short cut" is via the detour of social and political praxis.

II

The thought of Laing and Cooper is nourished by various intellectual traditions of which two stand out: (1) a neo-positivist social psychology and sociology focused on the group and group dynamics and (2) a European philosophical existentialism centered on the concrete existing individual. While these two traditions may seem incompatible they converge in a single concern: the individual and his/her immediate context. In different language—"interpersonal perception," "intersubjectivity"—both traditions repudiate the study of the individual abstracted from the context of other human beings; both stress the network of concrete human relations. Both, however, ultimately work to eat away the social context of these human relations; they reduce social relations to immediate human ones.

The study of group dynamics within sociology or psychology is hardly new; it derives from an American as well as a German tradition, from Charles H. Cooley as well as Georg Simmel and Kurt Lewin. Sociology itself has often been defined as the study of how social groups influence each other and their members. The attraction of this approach for establishment sociology is not difficult to discern; as Adorno and Horkheimer comment, the concept of society disappears to make way for endless empirical observations on group dynamics.[6] These empirical observations skirt the antagonistic relationship that is outside the laboratory—the individual and society—in favor of the safe, sound and verifiable one of individual and individual.

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6. "The investigation of the relationship of the individual and society is reduced to the level of the study of the dependence of the individual and group," T.W. Adorno, M. Horkheimer, Institut für Sozialforschung, in *Soziologische Exkurse* (Frankfurt, 1956), p. 55. The diversity of the group dynamic tradition can be glimpsed in one of its advocates, Kurt Lewin; evident in his writings is an existential moment, protesting against a narrow behaviorism which abstracts the individual from a human context: "One of the basic characteristics of field theory in psychology...is the demand that the field that influences the individual should be described not in 'objective physicalistic' terms, but in the way in which it exists for that person at that time." But as with Laing and Cooper this in no way precludes the mathematization or formalization of this context: "...it is possible to determine and to measure psychological atmospheres quite accurately." K. Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science*, ed. D. Cartwright (New York, 1951, 1964), pp. 62-63. Also Lewin was an initiator and organizer of the first T-groups and sensitivity training; see A. Marrow, *The Practical Theorist: The Life and Work of Kurt Lewin* (New York, 1969), pp. 210 f. Finally it could be noted that Lewin was a life-long friend of Karl Korsch—which perhaps explains or is explained by the positivist bent in Korsch's own thought; Lewin wrote a pamphlet in 1920 on Taylorism in a series edited by Korsch on "Practical Socialism." They also collaborated on a paper in 1939 on "Mathematical Constructs in Psychology and Sociology." Cf. Paul Breines, "Lukács and Korsch. 1910-1932" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Madison, Wisconsin, 1972), p. 226.

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With Laing and Cooper the group dynamic approach is extended to the study of schizophrenia. The promise is to understand schizophrenia by situating it in its immediate human context, usually the family. "Our interest," writes Laing (with Aaron Esterson), "is in persons always in relation with us, or with each other, and always in the light of their group context, which in this work is primarily the family, but may include also the extra-familial personal network of a family..." This method seeks to study "at one and the same time i) each person in the family; ii) the relations between persons in the family; iii) the family itself as a system."[7] The claim is that the "shift of view" from considering schizophrenia abstracted from a context to situating it within the family "*has an historical significance no less radical than the shift from a demonological to a clinical viewpoint three hundred years ago.*"[8]

The rub is that from the standpoint of theory, society is shuffled-out; the shift of viewpoints issues into the very problematic of the study of group dynamics in general: a social constellation is banalized to an immediate human network. It forgets that the relationship between "you and me" or "you and the family" is not exhausted in the immediate: all of society seeps in. If it is clear that the immediate relationship of boss and worker, teacher and student is grounded in a non-immediate social configuration, it is no less true of family relationships. Society as the determining structure dictates more than the husk of a relationship; it cuts into the living germ. Laing and Cooper are aware of this—but only aware; the awareness is not translated into theory, but remains on the level of continual observation.

The contradiction that inheres in all therapy turns into an antinomy. If the family is the immediate context of schizophrenia, it is not *the* context: society. Inasmuch as the limitations of family therapy are not acknowledged the therapy begins to confuse itself with social change. Yet the very material itself, the case histories presented, show to what degree the family, if it is the immediate situation for schizophrenia, is only part of the whole situation. The question which is implicitly posed by the family analysis of the child schizophrenic is the origin of the parents that 'caused' the schizophrenia. Evidently they emerged from other families, themselves caught in other networks, and so on: society enters by the back door. The family analysis pushes towards its limits; the facts discovered during the analysis, in suggesting that the family itself is victimized confesses that family therapy is insufficient. "Neither of Lucie's parents had emerged from their relations with their parents as persons in their own right. Both had been hopelessly immersed all their lives in phantasy unrecognized as such."[9] Or:

7. R.D. Laing, A. Esterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family* (New York, 1964), pp. 7, 9.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 13. Emphasis in the original; or less flamboyantly: "The most significant theoretical and methodological development in psychiatry of the last two decades is, in my view, the growing dissatisfaction with any theory or study of the individual which isolates him from his context," Laing, *Self and Others* (New York, 1961, 1969, 2nd revised edition), p. 65.
9. *Sanity, Madness and the Family*, p. 59.

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"Mrs. Church herself had been subject to her own four hundred blows, leaving her, as one report put it, an empty shell. Understandably, and indeed necessarily, Mrs. Church tended to destroy not only her own inner world but Claire's..."[10] The "and indeed necessarily" captures the whole dynamic of society.

The problem is not that family analysis and therapy is being used; it is that therapy does not attain self-consciousness: lucidity as to its scope. Because the tension between family and society, theory and therapy dissipate, social theory and change is absorbed by family therapy. The unadmitted tension between the theory and therapy takes its revenge: the therapy conceiving itself as dealing with the real context inches out to include more and more people in this context, and finally is damned to impotence, confronted by more people than any therapy could hope to 'treat.' Because the disjuncture between society and family is neglected, the specific praxis suitable for each is rendered an amalgam suitable for neither. Laing cites with approval the therapeutic approach of a doctor whose "strategy was to reconvene the network out of which mother had dropped in the past 20 years, eventually bringing together at one meeting upwards of 35 people, representing elements of no less than seven nuclear families. He did not 'treat' the son or the mother individually, or as a dyad, but 'treated' the whole network."[11]

The absurdity of this approach is based on the illusion that the therapist can "reconvene" the whole network of which the patient is a part, and secondly, even if it could be done, that these numbers of people could be 'treated.' The question, of course, is why stop with 35 people, since they are evidently involved with another 70 and so on. The implicit logic suggests the project of gathering all the members of society in one room, as if the antagonisms could be ironed out in the give and take of a group discussion. Objective conditions are refined into bad vibes. At times Laing has suggested that the entire world is an expanded family group, what he calls a "Total World System."[12] Truths adequate for family therapy degenerate into naive political pronouncements on "East" "West" relations passed-off as a family tiff. If there is a recognition of a distinction between family and society, the distinction is reduced to one of complexity not of kind or structure. "New elements" and a "new gestalt" do enter into the "larger pattern;" with that provision "it seems that our scheme of the *dyadic spiral* for the interplay of true perspectives has relevance in the international sphere." The relevance is shown on the advise as to how to avoid an "East-West" conflagration: "...If West thinks East thinks that West thinks that East thinks West is going to move first, then West..." etc. etc.[13]

10. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
11. Laing, *The Politics of the Family* (New York, 1969, 1971), p. 49.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
13. Laing, H. Phillipson, A.R. Lee, *Interpersonal Perception* (New York, 1966, 1972), p. 172.

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Forgotten is that society is not identical to a family, nor social relations to human relations; capitalism is not merely numbers of people involved in groups and families. A collaborator of Laing, Esterson, sums up the humanist reductionist principle: "A social system is simply the pattern of interaction and interexperience of the persons comprising it."[14] This is inexact: it is also a social construction and constriction which, if it is derived from human labor and activity, in turn dominates them; it is objective as well as subjective. A radical analysis of schizophrenia is committed to society as the determinant; evidently the mediations are crucial, and the family is one of them. But they are mediations, not origins; the family does not exist in a no-man's land. It itself is snared in a historical dynamic; it has changed in the past and it is changing now. It is as much victim as victimizer.

Again the point is not to renounce family therapy or group therapy; it is to realize to what extent even the most extended therapy remains therapy: a choice in how to treat the individual that leaves untouched the social roots. In that sense there is no such activity as radical therapy—there is only therapy and radical politics. Need it be said? There is no shame in aiding the victims, the sick, the damaged, the down-and-out. Mental illness and treatment is class illness and treatment.[15] There is much to be done within this reality; but the reformation of the social reality is another project, which if it is not utterly distinct from therapy, is not to be confused with it.

The question of the use of a medical or biological analogy in psychology can serve as a final clarification of the theory-therapy dialectic. Laing and Cooper, like many others, protest the use of such a model because it mystifies the social and human processes within psychology that are non-existent in non-psychological medicine. The very "diagnosis" or "definitions" in psychology enter into the dynamic of the situation differently than strict medical terms; for example, a medical diagnosis of tuberculosis, even an incorrect one, does not affect the disease, while one of "schizophrenia" may 'cause' schizophrenia.[16] The definitions, the doctor, the immediate human context specify the milieu of psychology differently than in non-psychological medicine.

This is undoubtedly true—but insufficient. The critique of a quasi-biological psychology in the name of society forgets that biological medicine is not outside the social dynamic; clarity here could illuminate the theory-therapy relation that exists in *both* spheres: psychological and non-psychological. The biological model contains a truth if it is freed from the mystification that removes it from history and society. The critique of the biological model lags behind a vast amount of critical literature that shows

14. A. Esterson, *The Leaves of Spring: Schizophrenia, Family and Sacrifice* (Pelican, 1972), p. 243.
15. A. Hollingshead, F.C. Redlich, *Social Class and Mental Illness* (New York, 1958, 1967).
16. *The Politics of the Family*, pp. 41-42.

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that not only medical care, but medical and 'biological' diseases and disorders themselves are subject to a social dynamic of class, stratification and so on.[17] If this be so, the theory-therapy dialectic can be pursued as it is valid in both dimensions, without, however, losing all distinction between the psychological and the non-psychological. Each dimension possesses a specific as well as a shared relationship to society.

The question of the social manufacture and perception of automobile accidents can be considered in this context; accidents are more than accidents; from the vast numbers of accidents 'on the job' to occupational diseases they are embedded in a social configuration.[18] So to with most diseases and sicknesses, from colds to infantile mortality to malaria. None of these are randomly distributed in populations; they possess a social content. Chronic disease, for instance, is not a biological statement about the poor, it is a social statement.[19] The fact, however, of the social origin does not preclude their treatment on an individual basis. The reverse is true: treatment on an individual basis must proceed at the same time that the theory suggests that the 'ailment' and ultimately the 'cure' is extra-individual. The victim of an automobile accident is not to be turned away by the politically aware doctor with the remark that he or she is not a victim of a specific car and accident but a victim of an obsolete transportation system kept alive by the necessities of profit. Both are true, and both are to be preserved in contradiction; the emergency of the individual is to be attended to even as it is traced to non-individual and social factors which are the real source.

The situation of the doctor 'treating' schizophrenia is in principle not dissimilar from one treating black-lung diseases or automobile 'accidents.' While there is neither identity nor complete separation between the psychic and somatic, the disjuncture of theory and therapy is valid in both; the therapy in each leaves untouched the social roots—which does not mean that the therapy is unnecessary. The damage from 'accidents,' psychic and physical, needs to be healed; the battered driver is to be cured so as to return to the expressways, this time to die. Psychic transfusions are to be given to the schizophrenic so he or she can be released into the madhouse called society. This contradiction is contained in therapy of each kind; it is to be elucidated, not veiled, as if some new treatment, be it for broken bones or broken souls, can magically escape from it. What Laing and Cooper tend to forget is that if family, extra-family therapy is progress over

17. For a recent bibliography of this material see *The Politics of Health Care*, ed. K. Rosenberg, G. Schiff, Boston Medical Committee for Human Rights (New England Free Press: Boston).

18. For a survey of occupational accidents and diseases see F. Wallick, *The American Worker: An Endangered Species* (New York, 1972).

19. See R. Hurly, "The Health Crisis of the Poor," and in the same volume, C.C. Hughes and J.M. Hunter, "Disease and 'Development' in Africa," in *Social Organization of Health*, ed. H.P. Dreitzel (New York, 1971).

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clinical therapy and analysis, this is progress in therapy, not social theory or praxis.

III

The concentration on the family nexus that Laing and Cooper advocate entails a concentration in the dimension in which this operates: the present communicative interaction of the family. The analysis proceeds on the plane of communication and the break-down of communication, meta-communication and lack of communication—"spirals" of misunderstanding. The analysis uses terms such as expectation, validation, confirmation, perception, and so on—terms which suggest communication in its verbal and non-verbal meaning.

The drift of the analysis is not distinct from that of the neo- and post-Freudians; it leaves the psychic depths and past for the present and accessible inter-human dynamics. The same critique of psychoanalysis is advanced: psychoanalysis leaves out the social. "Psychoanalytic theory has no construct for the dyad as such, nor indeed for any social system generated by more than one person at a time. Psychoanalytic theory has, therefore, no way of placing the single person in any social context."[20] As with past Freud critiques of the neo-Freudians, the "social" that is then added is simultaneously flattened-out, this time to communication.

The weaknesses of the communicative and interaction formulations are the weaknesses of common sense psychology; it is not that they are untrue, but superficial; and they become the more untrue the more the surface analysis drives out the past and psychic dimensions. Increasingly this seems to happen; the family appears more and more as a power group, and schizophrenia simply a product of mismatched roles, expectations, messages, and so on. The family "invents" schizophrenia; or "schizophrenic symptoms are virtually whatever makes the family unbearably anxious about the tentatively independent behavior of one of its offspring."[21] Or schizophrenia is considered the product of preconceptions and expectations: hence Laing suggests that an experiment in which a group of 'schizophrenics' would be treated as sane and a group of 'normals' treated as schizophrenic would show that expectation 'causes' the disease.[22]

If in Freud neuroses and psychoses are rooted in an erotic and infantile past, and hence are completely or only partially eradicable, here they are dependent on the flow of communication. The communication models implicitly accept a parliamentary notion of reality where there are no real antagonisms; in the official accounts all conflict and differences are traced

20. *Interpersonal Perception*, p. 8. Cf. D. Cooper, "Freud Revisited," *New Left Review*, 20 (Summer, 1963), pp. 112 f.
21. D. Cooper, *Psychiatry and Anti-Psychiatry*, p. 19.
22. *The Politics of the Family*, p. 46.

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to break-downs in communication, as if real contradictions did not exist. The same notion is stated or implied by much of the communication theory of psychoses; repression and antagonism are sublimated to mixed and confused messages. Hence in Gregory Bateson, who pioneered this approach—and on whom Laing and Cooper draw—the ego-function is described as "the process of discriminating communicational modes..." In schizophrenia "we must not lok for some specific traumatic experience in the infantile etiology... The specificity for which we search is to be on an abstract or formal level."[23]

Again: the point is not that these formulations are inaccurate; but that they are superficial. If within therapy a communicative approach is effective, this is not questioned. What is questioned is when an effective approach within the treatment makes claims to be more than a description of current processes. A break-down of communication is more than a break-down of communication; it is rooted in other tensions and antagonisms. Communication is a moment of existence, not the whole of it.

The confusion between the surface and the essence lead Laing and Cooper to make the primal bourgeois error: they mistake the phenomenon specific to one historical era as universal and invariant. In brief they take the human relations that prevail in late bourgeois society as human relations as such; role behavior is passed off as human behavior and not a degraded form of it. What Laing and Cooper barely broach is that the inter-personal relations that proceed exclusively in the track of images, confirmations, meta-confirmations, and so on, are already an alienated mode of behavior;[24] it is the behavior and communication of the disintegrating ego.

When Laing writes that "human beings are constantly thinking about others and about what others are thinking about them, and what others think they are thinking about others, and so on,"[25] he neglects to add the crucial qualification: not all human beings but human beings who have been mesmerized and mutilated. "Human beings" seek double and triple confirmation when the first fails; and the first fails when the ego that advances it fails. The ego, frightened over its own fragility, seeks endless confirmations it can neither give nor receive. The logic of human relations approaches the logic of paranoia; in every nook and cranny lurks danger. Confirmation hardly allays the fears; one needs meta-confirmation and meta-meta-confirmation. "What I think you think of me reverberates back

23. G. Bateson, "Towards a Theory of Schizophrenia," in Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (New York, 1972), pp. 205, 206.

24. To be sure, the intent is exactly to undo the 'knots' or the spirals of mis-communication. "The patterns delineated here have not yet been classified by a Linnaeus of human bondage..." Laing, *Knots* (New York, 1970), p. i. But this intent is concerned with the failures of communication; it does not turn into a critique of this mode of communication in general.

25. *Interpersonal Perception*, p. 30.

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to what I think of myself, and what I think of myself in turn affects the way I act towards you; this influences me and so on."[26] "And so on:" the task is endless, without escape or exit. In the prison of mirrors which is society the lifers stare at the mirrors for signs of life.[27] Multiple reflections are the opium for the multiple wounds the ego has suffered.

This is not to argue that in a future and human society confirmations and meta-confirmations would not exist; they undoubtedly would. But they become an exclusive pasttime in a society where the ego is on its way out. Total confirmation is an imperative where total insecurity is a reality. "Knots" becomes the norm of human discourse when the social noose is gagging the individual. This is the joyless reality—but it is also the facade: a facade because it is a reflection of an objective and social reality that is hidden from view. The theory of interpersonal perception is a theory of the spectacle.

The effortless shift in Laing and Cooper from a stress on the real and interpersonal context of human relations to a symbolization of this context, from an existential reality to a positivist one, which otherwise seems inexplicable, is due to the very confusion between appearance and essence. Laing and Cooper, like role psychologists, are trapped in the facade which can be adequately presented but not penetrated by positivist logic. The maps and schemes capture the movement of reality, but only once this reality itself has reduced men and women to carriers of signs and symbols. The maps of human relations that they plot are the reified expression of reification: "p→(o→(p→(o→p))) He thinks his wife thinks he supposes she loves him."[28] This is the loveless talk of a loveless reality.

The move from existentialism to positivism is eased by the facade which is simultaneously both: existential and positivist. What is meant by facade is not a phony front for the real thing, but a facade in that the social and objective factors are veiled. Exactly because the facade *is* the immediate reality of human relations in late bourgeois society, in exploring it one can claim that one is exploring the existential reality; and exactly because this existential reality is alienated and dehuman it can be adequately expressed in positivist schemes. Existentialism and positivism converge when the existential reality is a positivist one.

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26. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
27. "We have all noticed those people attracted to plate glass windows, transported by their own reflections in the glass. Caught by their own glance, they are compelled to see themselves in the way Others see them. A perpetual rhythm etched into the hardened surfaces of the urbanized world, reflecting the Image Crisis that affects all of those who must define themselves in relation to the Super-Alien Other. On all sides these mirrors beckon and insist." Maxy Beml, "William Burroughs and the Invisible Generation," *Telos*, 13 (Fall, 1972), p. 129.
28. Laing, *Self and Others*, p. 157.

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IV

In existentialism Laing and Cooper find their philosophical roots. "It is to the existential tradition, however, that I acknowledge my main intellectual indebtedness."[29] Also to be recalled is that the least read book of Laing and Cooper is probably *Reason and Violence*, an exposition of Sartre. A discussion of this matter is here impossible; in general the Sartrean existentialism as filtered through Laing and Cooper does not correct its original weaknesses—some of which Marcuse has indicated.[30]

One element of this existential tradiction can clarify the subjective approach in Laing and Cooper that threatens to swallow the social and objective reality. Laing appeals to Feuerbach as the initiator of the existential discovery of the inter-personal reality. "Over a hundred years ago Feuerbach effected a pivotal step in philosophy. He discovered that philosophy had been exclusively oriented around 'I'. No one had realized that the 'you' is as primary as the I." "The presence of these others has a profound reactive effect on me... Philosophically, the meaninglessness of the category 'I' without its complementary category of 'you' first stated by Feuerbach, was developed by Martin Buber."[31]

Though anyone and everyone can and has been included in the grabbag of existentialism, the appeal to Feuerbach has its reason; but Laing and Cooper recapitulate not only the strengths of Feuerbach, but also his failings. His strength is that, against the idealism of Hegel a human and materialistic reality is advanced. "Again and again Feuerbach insists that the starting point of philosophy cannot be philosophy but the actual life of man. The primary fact in the life of man is...the existence of the human community."[32] But in Feuerbach the same antinomies surface as with Laing, Cooper, and humanist psychologists: the human community shrinks to the immediacy of the I/You encounter, and this is abstracted from the historical and social reality. History in Feuerbach and Feuerbachians turns into anthropology, an invariant. "The essence of man," wrote Feuerbach, "is contained only in the community and unity of man with man; it is a unity, however, which rests only in the reality of the distinction between I and thou." Or he wrote, "the true dialectic" is a "dialogue between I and thou."[33]

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29. Laing, *The Divided Self* (Baltimore, Md., 1959, 1965), p. 10.
30. For a Marcusian critique of Sartre, see R. Aronson, "The Roots of Sartre's Thought," *Telos*, 13 (Fall, 1972), pp. 47-67; and for a somewhat different presentation of the existential moment in Laing, see C. Ratner, "Principles of Dialectical Psychology," *Telos*, 9 (Fall, 1971), esp. pp. 98-103.
31. *Interpersonal Perception*, pp. 3, 4. For a history of the I/thou concept, see the first part of J. Cullberg, *Das Du und die Wirklichkeit. Zum ontologischen Hintergrund der Gemeinschaftskategorie*, in *Uppsala Universitets Arsskrift*, I (1933), Uppsala, Sweden.
32. S. Hook, *From Hegel to Marx* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1936, 1962), p. 258.
33. L. Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, ed. M.H. Vogel (New York, 1966), pp. 71-72.

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It is to be recalled that Marx and Engels took Feuerbach to task exactly for the reduction of a social reality to a timeless human encounter. Engels in a fragment ridiculed Feuerbach's I/thou formulation. "Philosophy has reached a point where the trivial fact of the inevitability of intercourse between human beings—a fact without knowledge of which the second generation that ever existed would not have been produced, a fact already involved in the sexual difference—is presented by philosophy at the end of its entire development as the greatest result. And presented, moreover, in the mysterious form of the 'unity of I and you'."[34] Or as Marx and Engels wrote in *The German Ideology*, Feuerbach "conceives of men not in the given social connection, not under their existing conditions of life, which have made them what they are, he never arrived at the really existing men, but stops at the abstraction 'man'."[35] He leaves out the "ensemble of the social relations."[36]

To be more exact: what is lacking in Feuerbach is what is lacking in Laing and Cooper; according to Marx and Engels this is the conception of man as activity, as praxis. It is precisely for this reason that Marx, to follow Marcuse, "reaches back beyond Feuerbach to Hegel."[37] For Hegel the concept of labor is the irreplaceable element of human history. Here labor does not merely mean factory work; it means the life praxis of man—objectification in the social world. Labor is the specific mode of activity for human existence; alienated labor is one form of labor, not labor itself.[38]

Because objectification or praxis is lacking in Feuerbach, his theory for all its humanism, its I/thou, is a passive one; it does not comprehend the world as a social environment, the congealed product of human praxis. This failure Laing and Cooper share with Feuerbach; they succumb to the spectacle: the non-activity of watching and viewing and being watched. What Marcuse wrote of Feuerbach could be written of Laing and Cooper. "In Feuerbach man's possession of, and relation to, the world remains essentially theoretical, and this is expressed in the fact that the way of relating...is 'perception.' In Marx, to put it briefly, labour replaces this perception, although the central importance of the theoretical relationship does not disappear; it is combined with labour in a relationship of dialectical interpenetration."[39]

The logic of Laing and Cooper's approach to human relations is

34. The fragment is found in the appendix to Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology* (Moscow, 1964), p. 660.
35. *The German Ideology*, p. 58.
36. Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," VI.
37. H. Marcuse, "The Foundations of Historical Materialism," in Marcuse, *Studies in Critical Philosophy* (London, 1972), p. 21.
38. For a discussion of the concept of labor, see Marcuse, "Ueber die philosophischen Grundlagen des wirtschaftswissenschaftlichen Arbeitsbegriff," in Marcuse, *Kultur und Gesellschaft* II (Frankfurt, 1965). An English translation is now in *Telos*, 16 (Summer, 1973).
39. Marcuse, "The Foundation of Historical Materialism," p. 22.

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Feuerbachian; inter-personal perceptions, images, expectations become fundamental determining structures, and not secondary ones. In Laing and Cooper they dislodge the basic mode of appropriation of the world, human praxis. "Self-identity," writes Laing, "is constituted not only by our looking at ourselves, but also by our looking at others looking at us. At this more complex, more concrete level, self-identity is a synthesis of my looking at me with my view of others view of me."[40] This is the theory of the spectacle; the passivity of the consumer is elevated into a theory of human identity.[41] Because the means of production and reproduction of life answer to capital and profit, life itself seeks refuge in non-activity; human praxis in this world contracts to you-watching me-watching you-watching me. Passive watching is the sanctioned form of relief in a society that has squeezed out the only relief: active human experience. The peep show is no longer the side show but with audience participation is society. Laing and Cooper work this up into a theory of human—not inhuman—relations.

Finally: as existence turns into positivism, the reign of things over life, non-dialectical logic knows only one escape: mysticism, spiritualism, and the like. This is an emphatic note in Laing and Cooper; today it is part of the Zeitgeist. The prevailing reason and reality are confused with reason itself, and it is supposed that the non-rational is an alternative outside reality and not further in it.

The assumptions that mystification is a response to alienation, 'inner' space to the lack of 'outer' space, was suspect long ago, and has gained nothing in the interim.

The key to the logic is crystallized in the debate between Marcuse and N.O. Brown about the latter's *Love's Body*. Brown wrote in a rebuttal to Marcuse's review, "the alternative to reification is mystification."[42] This is the crux of the matter. To critical theory mystification is the complement to reification, not its dissolution. It seeks to trick away reification by using reification's own tricks: to make things dance before the eyes while bourgeois society limps along. If "our time has been distinguished" by an almost total forgetfulness of the internal world, to follow Laing, it is not to be called to life by forgetting the outer world that forgot the inner one. The promise of the "universal unleashing of a full spirituality" (Cooper) wll turn into a universally controlled and programmed reality if it is not translated into social praxis. "Occultism," wrote Adorno, "is the complement of reification. When the objective world appears to the living as blinder than ever before they attempt to find meaning in it by abracadabra."[43]

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40. *Interpersonal Perception*, p. 6.
41. "The spectacle within society corresponds to the concrete manufacture of alienation," Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit, 1970), p. 30.
42. N.O. Brown, "A Reply to Herbert Marcuse," in Marcuse, *Negations* (Boston, 1968), p. 244.
43. T.W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (Frankfurt, 1951, 1964), p. 323.

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Today half-serious mystics vie with totally serious ones; stars, signs, gurus interpret a world of capitalist hieroglyphics. The messages from the stars inadvertently tell the truth: the daily fate and plight is irrational—it is in the stars;[44] hence it soothes those who suspect that life is as predetermined as it actually is by shifting the blame from the social to natural and supernatural reality. But today the cults are not only a response to a cold and bleak society, but to a left that promised too much too fast. Those who banked everything on a revolution now or in six months were left with nothing when the time schedule changed. A 'law' to be formulated? Mystical politics produces mysticism without politics. The very recent interviews with Laing suggest this progression.

Not to be forgotten is the strength of the writing of Laing and Cooper; in a period when reason is mad, madness has its reason. Laing, Cooper, and their collaborators have emphasized this insight. But, as it has been argued here, this has more and more eroded into a parenthesis in a text of pop existentialism, positivism, and spiritualism. The text itself loses the tension between theory and therapy, and advances notions of human identity and relations that take the mutilated wrecks that people the social landscape as specimens of a future humanity. Endless talk on I and thou forgets that neither can be created out of endless talk. The writings of Laing and Cooper more and more suggest the confusion of psychic first aid with liberation.

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44. See Adorno's "The Stars Down to Earth: The Los Angeles Times Astrology Column," in *Jahrbuch fur Amerikastudien*, II (1957), pp. 19 ff.

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The Critique of Fetishism in Marx's Grundrisse*

by Pier Aldo Rovatti

In these brief remarks I propose a reading of the "Fragment on Machines" in Marx's *Grundrisse*.[1] This reading recognizes in the "Fragment" the central problematic of the *Grundrisse*'s fundamental analyses of the relation between objectified labor and living labor, the meaning of this relationship within a comprehensive interpretation of the theory and, finally, the meaning of the contradiction within the relation itself which is essential for the comprehension and critique of the entire capitalist mode of production. Here this "Fragment" will be analyzed from the viewpoint of the criticism of fetishism, thus indicating some of the Fragment's ambiguous elements.[2]

As is well known, in the Fragment the relation between objectified and living labor (for Marx the foundation of the capitalist relation of production) and the contradiction that it generates (which is given historically as a tendency)[3] are extended to the maximum limit of capitalist

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1. By "Fragment on Machines" what is meant here is a section from Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie* (Berlin, 1953), pp. 583-594, which was first published in Italian translation by Renato Solmi in *Quaderni Rossi*, no. 4 (1964), under the title "Frammento sulle Macchine." Two English translations of this fragment are available: one, translated by David McLellan, in Karl Marx, *The Grundrisse* (New York, 1971), pp. 132-143, and the other, of course, is Martin Nicolaus' translation of the whole book (London, 1973), pp. 692-706. In the same issue of *Quaderni Rossi* an essay by Raniero Panzieri was published, "Plusvalore e Pianificazione," in which the *Grundrisse* passage is interpreted within the perspective of progressive fetishization and consequently, within the critique of fetishism: i.e., the hypothesis of capitalism's inability to sustain itself at its highest level must be read as a festishism of the neutral development of the productive forces (rationality, planning): "In light of these developments, the 'objectification' manifested in the trinitary formula appears as a much less 'perfected' form than in Marx... The task of apologetic economics is made much easier... Thus it happens that, in general, Marxist thought misses the fundamental characteristic of today's capitalism which is in the recovery of the fundamental expression of the law of surplus value, the plan, from the level of the factory to the social level." *Quaderni Rossi*, no. 4 (1964), pp. 286, 288. In a note Panzieri also points to the problem of the direct passage from capitalism to communism suggested by the "Fragment," in relation to various solutions presented in *Capital* and in the *Critique of the Gotha Program:* the projected number of the *Quaderni* on this theme never appeared.

2. For my formulation of the analysis of the critique of fetishism, see Pier Aldo Rovatti, "Fetishism and Economic Categories," *Telos* 14 (Winter, 1972), pp. 87-105. As regards the total theme of the critique of fetishism in the *Grundrisse*, see the fourth chapter of the book, Pier Aldo Rovatti, *Critica e Scientificità in Marx* (Milan, 1973).

3. "What, then, does the realization of the tendency signify for Marx? Is this realization perhaps the simple emergence of an inevitable necessity? Or is it, on the other hand, an historical rule free of determined contents, a transitional norm applicable to obsolete cultures? Neither of the two. The realization of the tendency in Marx is the emergence of a need of the masses of acting subjectivities, articulated according to the specific determinations that

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development. Thus, as Marx saw it, they allowed the tracing out of the global transformation of capitalist into communist society. Here we find the clearest presentation of communism: it resembles the problem of necessity and freedom—the subject of a page in the third volume of *Capital*, which Western Marxism has discussed at length.[4] The question that we must ask is whether Marx succeeds, in the *Grundrisse*, in developing the notion of communism while avoiding the difficulties of the objectivistic position—a position which eventually falls back into naturalism. The Fragment develops a critique dealing precisely with the reduction of communism (understood as liberation from the reign of necessity) to the passage from necessity to freedom. The naturalistic reduction to the level of productive forces and the satisfaction of material needs, and its consequent subordination of social form to the degree of development of the productive forces, i.e., the degree of development of wealth, leaves out precisely the central moment of the contradiction: the moment identifying the capitalist relation of production and characterizing its specific mode of development. Here it is necessary to consider how far Marx develops this critique, and to what extent the objectivistic position was reintroduced, e.g., in the very contradiction.

The ambiguity of the passage from the third volume of *Capital* emerges when Marx, in introducing the idea of progress and development, undermines his anthropological model of man or an ensemble of men defined materially by the need for a determined exchange with what is external (nature as aggregate matter), and by freedom as the possibility to rise above nature. In fact, the reign of necessity expands and there is a quantitative increase of needs, so that it becomes contradictory to speak about overcoming necessity in the context of progress. Otherwise, it becomes essential to introduce an internal relation between freedom and necessity so that, e.g., freedom may regulate the expansion of necessity and not be the result of the process.

In any case, whether freedom represents the outcome, or is seen as a presence to be realized, there seems to be no outcome within Marx's theoretical framework. This framework, furthermore, is continuous with the dominant structure of his philosophical thought and indicates its natur-

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capitalist development, in this relation, is forced to bring together... Now the tendency is in no instance a necessary and ineluctable law running through reality... The tendency is the practico-theoretical explication of labor's viewpoint in a determined historical epoch. In this sense, to pose the tendency, to describe it, to define its contradictions, is a route opposed to that which runs through economic determinism." Antonio Negri, *Crisi dello Stato-piano, Comunismo e Organizzazione Rivoluzionaria* (Florence, 1972), pp. 145, 161.

4. Cf. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III (Moscow, 1963), pp. 799-800. The theme, already central in the young Lukács, was born in mind above all by the Frankfurt School. In Marcuse's reflection it is a constant motif, from the 1933 essay on the concept of labor (cf. Herbert Marcuse, "On the Concept of Labor" in *Telos*, 16 [Summer, 1973] pp. 9-37) to his most recent *Counterrevolution and Revolt* (Boston, 1972).

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alistic and evolutionistic limits, in addition to the mortgage of the "German ideology." There does not seem to be a way out of the naturalism of the productive forces. Thus, necessity and freedom become concepts of a social and natural ontology toward which Marx certainly leaned in *Capital*. This greatly facilitates the work of those who want to reconstruct his thought in that sense (see, e.g., Kosik and the later Lukacs). If so, we must ask whether these concepts, together with others such as the labor process, end, and ultimately, whether man and society may be the naturalistic foundation of a critique whose main object is precisely the naturalism of ideology and the structural naturalization of the social. It is clear that this reduction (which concerns all "Marxist philosophy" from Engels to Mao) does not restore the meaning of Marx's actual critique of the capitalist mode of production. But it does not seem possible to simply resolve the problem by suppressing it, i.e., by saying that the critique needs no foundation and that we may therefore ignore Marx whenever he seems to leave the domain of the critique, in brief: to deprive him of his "philosophy."

The methodological concern with returning to concrete analysis is absolutely necessary in order to prevent Marxism itself from being transformed into an ideology where theory would come to have, tendentially and in fact, the power to control and occlude reality. Yet, concrete analysis must not be a way to avoid fundamental theoretical questions: on the contrary, it is the way to construct valid answers to these questions, and to construct new questions and new ways of questioning.

Marx's concrete analysis of the industrial society of his time provides some answers concerning the communism of associated producers, and therefore, concerning the relation between man and nature, the meaning of history and society. The concrete analysis being carried out concerning the present phase of capitalist development (of which 1968 has been an important focus from which to theoretically grasp the specific) poses new questions about the revolutionary subject, the possibility and meaning of communism, and tends to provide new answers concerning the role of science and the relation between individual and society. Without these questions and answers, concrete analysis would be theoretically silent or, better, would be impossible. In fact it is possible, but it does not always make explicit its own theoretical level.

The preceding considerations are relevant to a reading of the Fragment independent of the abstract attitude which in Marx would separate concrete analysis from philosophical "digressions." But they raise further methodological problems. We must read Marx on a double theoretical plane. One deals with the naturalism of the theory of progress (e.g., necessity and freedom) and the other (theoretically more often implicit) with the critique of fetishism. This last one allows solutions I have elsewhere called phenomenological as opposed to ontological and objectivistic ones. It is not an abstract demand devoid of any historical determination: a call for

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pure "reconstruction." Rather, it is one of the theoretical questions that arise from our concrete social situation—that of late capitalism—understood for the most part as still a tendential model and characterized by an extension of the relations of production throughout society, involving strata which originally were only indirectly tied to capitalist production and reproduction.

The theory of progress is absorbed, on the one hand, by capitalist development when it can actually allow the great majority of individuals under it to cross the limit of necessity. On the other hand, it is absorbed by the coming into being of socialism which presently appears as inadequate and which deviates from a qualitative revolutionary leap. Thus, it does not seem paradoxical that the revolutionary subject can refer less to socialist countries than to those of late capitalism. Consequently, the theory of progress must be seen as a hypothesis which no longer yields the meaning of Marxism. What is called for, then, is more and more a critical reading of Marx as opposed to the reductive one traditionally chosen by Marxism. Today precisely in terms of a concrete analysis, the theory of progress is no longer able to successfully carry out a critique of ideology.

The theory of progress suggests an objectivistic interpretation of the Fragment. If the historical goal obtains when the time at one's disposal becomes the measure of wealth, and if, in spite of itself, the development of capitalism allows the possibility to create "disposable social time" by *objectively* reducing socially necessary labor time (i.e., for the entire society) through objective factors of organic composition, the capitalist mode of production transforms itself or, better, undergoes a transition to another mode of production based on free time and the needs of the social individual. In this sense, rather than advocating a theory of the crash, the Fragment can be seen as advancing the hypothesis of a continuity of development which has been called the "ideology of the gradual extinction of labor-power."[5]

This theory of progress may be either accepted or refuted, with ideologically equivalent conclusions. The refutation is as follows: to the extent that it could not take into account opulent consumption as a possibility for enormous development within the productive process it is a weak and

5. "Now I think that among all the ideologies that come back to the working class today (because, as I see it, there is a return of ideologies to the working class), perhaps the most dangerous is the one that foresees or points directly to a slow death, or a sort of gradual extinction of industrial labor power, i.e., the ideologies which deal with the disappearing flock... I refer to the *ideologies of automation.* We must see them as a kind of theory of non-labor which bears a clear mark of the capitalist imprint." "The technological limit to the suppression of labor, precisely the one that capitalism cannot overcome, is given not by capital's organic composition, but by its political nature as a social relation." Mario Tronti, "Classe Operaia e Sviluppo," *Contropiano*, 3/70, pp. 468, 470. Cf. in general the entire debate with the contributions of Alberto Asor Rosa in the same number of the journal, and of Cacciari and Tafuri in the preceding issue (*Contropiano*, 2/70).

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unverified theory.[6] The acceptance, on the other hand, goes thusly: today we already live in a transitional phase characterized by the development of constant capital. It is only a question of "recognizing" this situation in order to carry out the conversion of constant capital into a "band of humanized nature."[7] In both cases the ideological veil consists in absorbing communism into the theory of progress or in infinitely postponing its realization, or even in de-realizing it by emphasizing the management of the band of humanized nature and the correlative devaluing of the changing of relations of production. In both cases, which are examples of advanced bourgeois ideology and current revisionist Marxist ideology, the break is replaced with continuity and the relations of production are considered as moments within the dynamic of the productive forces. In the hypothesis of consumption as the answer to the development of the capitalist contradiction foreseen by Marx, if the problem is seen in simple terms of economic re-structuring which gets completely rid of the theme of communism there is, in the transition hypothesis, as the actual state of late

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6. "...such a position implies a complete disregard for the possibility that, as is well known, has instead been historically obtained on an extremely vast scale: the possibility of opulent consumption within the system. The realization of this possibility gives rise to an extraordinarily broad perspective of further development of the productive process. Hence it follows that, if it is true that the possibilities for the attainment of free time created by the workings of capital are not subsequently realized by capital itself, it does not follow that this missing realization is an element of objective crisis." Claudio Napoleoni, *Smith, Ricardo e Marx* (Turin, 1970), p. 208. Napoleoni's entire position is significant in this respect: it shows how he interprets the relation between alienation and exploitation and how he attempts to disengage the concept of capital from its nature as a social relation. This position does not seem to me to have been revised by Napoleoni's later writings dealing with abstract labor. Cf. besides the "Lezioni sul Capitolo Sesto Inedito di Marx" (Turin, 1972), the paper delivered at the Convegno Gramsci of October, 1971, now in *Il Marxismo Italiano degli Anni Sessanta* (Rome, 1972). For a comprehensive analysis of the ideological level of this position, see the essays of Francesco Ciafaloni, "L'Ideologia della Sinistra Cattolica in Italia," *La Rivista Trimestrale, Quaderni Piacentini*, 43, 1971, and of Andrea Ginzburg, "Dal Capitalismo Borghese al Capitalismo Proletario," *Quaderni Piacentini*, 44-45, 1971.

7. "The mature Marx no longer theorized about the integral subjective consumption of alienated social wealth. On the contrary, he structured theoretically the delimitation of constant capital as a second nature and as organic social body... Freedom is not, therefore, the reabsorption of the objective world, but rather the rational control of the protective band...freedom is not constructed at the expense of the objective world." "In fact, communism is not, as has been maintained, the reabsorption within subjectivity of reified objective conditions. Nor, as has also been maintained, is it a displacement of formal elements within a given structure. And finally, it is not merely the critical experience of the limitations and of the irrationalities of bourgeois society. Rather, it is the separation of a sphere of necessity from a sphere of freedom, so that the two resulting separated spheres may become immediately visible to social agents." Nicola Badaloni, *Per il Comunismo* (Turin, 1972), pp. 169, 175-176. It is indicative that an analysis such as Badaloni's has been presented as the theoretical focus of the recent Convegno Gramsci on Marxism in the sixties. Communism, Badaloni claims, is the rational closing of the gaps formed by the relaxation of the unitary character of capitalist relations. This rationality consists in the separation of necessity and in the autonomization of constant capital for the "humanization" of the band of nature thus isolated: separation and humanization are phases of the same project, and the separation is already the objective character of the transition (cf. pp. 203, 204).

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capitalism, relative to communism, a clear distinction between the economic and the non-economic spheres. On the contrary, communism is the separation of the two spheres, a separation made *visible* in fact, while previously it was so only in theory. This last hypothesis enhances the proposed reading of the passage from the third volume of *Capital* concerning the reign of necessity and the reign of freedom: the separation of necessity and freedom is the ideological presupposition of the theory of the progress of productive forces—a presupposition which can obviously only be a result or a derivation.

But, as has already been emphasized, the Fragment is richer in implications than the page in *Capital*. Of course, it may be claimed that in the *Grundrisse* Marx still hung onto the idea of the individual's self-realization which subsequently disappeared in *Capital*. Yet, the main point seems to lie elsewhere, in a greater explication of Marx's oscillation in the analysis of the contradiction. In *Capital* this tends to stiffen in the formulation of a relation between productive forces and relations of production as an incontrovertibly given state of affairs and as the historical base for every mode of production. It is a question of becoming much more sensitive to the problematic character of this formulation to the extent that it is only within the relation of production that one may speak of a level of productive forces and of contradiction. The productive forces remain productive forces of capital, and development is development within such a subsumption.[8]

The theory of progress is thus effectively assailable only from the viewpoint of subsumption, which in turn can be appropriated only through a critique of the fetishism of constant capital. From the viewpoint of subsumption, i.e., of the relation of production, the scientific *general intellect* appears as the greatest alienation of social relations. When Marx speaks of the social individual in the context of the Fragment, he concretely assumes the viewpoint of the historical subject (and theoretically that of the critique of fetishism).

The "general intellect" is the moment of maximum fetishization to the extent that it is simultaneously the greatest dissimulation of the relation of production and its maximum extension. The fetishistic character becomes clear in the discord between scientific development and the development of social relations wherein the latter become quantitative results of the former, and where there occurs complete depersonalization of the very relation. It is not true that with respect to social knowledge at the other pole we find the

8. The simple assumption of the contradiction between productive forces and the relations of production is only one way of posing the problem, and moreover already a strongly compromised position. Consequently, an "orthodox" analysis, of the type that Lelio Basso used in his essay "Sviluppo Capitalistico e Rivoluzione Socialista," *Problemi del Socialismo*, 43, 1969, runs the risk of remaining an inadequate theoretical answer to the questions posed by late capitalism. For a framework needed for a coherent reply, cf. Paolo Gambazzi's essay "Le Forze Produttive e il Concetto di Capitale," *Aut Aut*, 123-124, 1971.

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collective worker already constituted as a collective subject. Instead, we find there the greatest division of labor and maximum desocialization since capital has totally removed social power as the most advanced or complete moment of the original subsumption.[9]

It remains, however, that the absence of an explicit critique of fetishism in the Fragment may leave the ambiguity intact. In fact, to the extent that fetishism is the phenomenal manifestation of alienation, the overturning of alienation into liberation is unthinkable without first destroying the fetishized barrier of the social relations of production. Therefore, the contradiction's development cannot present itself merely as the overcoming of the very contradiction within abstract labor itself (labor-form) toward a contradiction which is objectively only within the productive forces (diminution of necessary labor). In the final analysis Marx cannot fail to recognize this: at the end of the Fragment he must say that the conditions for the overturning obtain when disposable time is no longer converted into surplus value, thus ceasing to have a "contradictory character." In order for this to happen, the mass of workers, the collective worker, must appropriate their own surplus labor. Marx continues: "When this has been done, disposable time ceases to have a contradictory character. Thus firstly, the labor time necessary will be measured by the requirements of the social individual, and secondly, social productivity will grow so rapidly that, although production is reckoned with a view to the wealth of all, the disposable time of all will increase. For real wealth is the developed productive force of all individuals. It is no longer the labor time but the disposable time which is the measure of wealth."[10] It is clear, then, that Marx did not believe that capital's creation of disposable time did much damage to the foundation of the relations of production consisting in the reduction of human activity to labor-power and its ever more intensified exploitation. Thus, it appears that development carries along the maximization of exploitation, parallel to the extension of the relations of production in social space and in the use of science as a productive social force at the service of capital.

As for the statement that "production based on exchange value therefore falls apart,"[11] it is a question of interpreting this "therefore": exploitation no longer appears simply as measurable by the quantitative use of labor-power (labor time), and therefore—in this sense—requires a deeper analysis. If the larceny of the labor time of others can appear as a "miserable" base with respect to the new basis created by the development of great industry, it is because exploitation must be measured in relation to the complex relation of dependency that precedes the constitution of labor

9. For a concrete examination of the problems posed by large industry in Italy, cf. Ugo Pipitone, "Note su Grande Industria e Divisione del Lavoro," *Quaderni Piacentini*, 47, 1972.

10. Marx, *The Grundrisse, op.cit.*, pp. 144-145; Nicolaus trans., p. 708.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 142. Nicolaus trans., p. 705.

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power, both individual and collective, and implies reconsideration of the genesis and constitution of subjective activity into a universal commodity.[12] More specifically, it implies the reconsideration of the relation between productive and unproductive labor in terms of a process of transforming the concrete into the abstract, taking into account all the transformations that have taken place in the relations of production. What must be examined is the *way* in which the passage of social potentiality takes place from active subjects to capital, holding fast the presupposition that this passage, the necessity and source of capitalist development, is the contradiction that defines the very mode of capitalist production.

Turning to the Fragment's conclusion, Marx says that on the one hand capital becomes rationalized and prepares the conditions necessary to leave the realm of necessity, but on the other hand it unfolds the process of fetishization up to the level of the appropriation of general productivity by deactivating the productive agent and reducing him to a controller "at the side of the process of production." With respect to the page from the third volume of *Capital*, the analysis in terms of simple necessity is invalidated to the extent that natural necessity (or even historical-natural necessity) may be fulfilled by capital. On the contrary: as a result of the domination of surplus labor or of the contradictory character of disposable time, *social necessity* is exalted.

Thus the Fragment vacillates between two types of interpretations: between a new fetishism deriving from the theory of progress and the self-suppression of (naturalized) necessity, and the critique of fetishism understood as the need to unmask the relation of dependency that has developed in this way, to reconstitute social subjectivity. Against the first interpretation we may bring to bear the considerations concerning the difference between labor reduced to pure abstraction and the power of the productive process. The function of supervision and control is described in terms of an anthropology in which man and nature are the two poles, although the means is no longer the modified Hegelian natural object, but the entire industrial process. Here Marx makes a genuine leap: "In this transformation, what appears as the mainstream of production and wealth is neither the immediate labor performed by the worker, nor the time that he works—but the appropriation by man of his own general productive force, his understanding of the nature and the mastery of it; in a word the development of the social individual."[13] It is a leap because the exclusion

12. The most significant reference for the concepts of genesis and constitution, in the context of the theory of knowledge, is Husserlian phenomenology, cf. in particular, Tran Duc Thao, *Fenomenologia e Materialismo Dialettico* (Milan, 1970), part I. Also of great interest is the emergence of these themes within Marxism, as in the case of Hans-Jürgen Krahl: cf. his essay, "Contributi al Corso di Critica dell'Economia Politica," *Aut Aut*, 133, 1973 (e.g., the last section) and in general the volume *Konstitution und Klassenkampf* (Frankfurt, 1971).

13. Marx, *The Grundrisse, op.cit.*, p. 142. Nicolaus trans., p. 705.

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(or self-exclusion?) of the process of production is presented as a possibility of real social domination over nature. Therefore, if it is not reread within the perspective of the critique of fetishism, the quote may appear ambiguous since it simultaneously describes a (fetishistic) movement of the process of production becoming autonomous and a real development of the social individual. The process of becoming autonomous and intersubjective power intersect and seem to reciprocally constitute one another. The ambiguity which, as has been seen, leaves room for the theory of progress, is translated in Marx's inability at this level to exhibit a foundation of the critique: a dialectic which constitutes the subjective and objective conditions in an intentional movement.

Since the themes of communism and of contradiction perform a fundamental role in the critique of fetishism and, generally, in Marx's idea of the dialectic, it is interesting to see, in light of the preceding considerations, how they are treated in the Fragment.

We have already considered communism at the level of the theory of progress. Outside of the ideology, it represents the intentional dimension of the critique: the nexus of meaning between theory and revolutionary praxis. For Marx, the fall of intentionality means the uncoupling of praxis from comprehensive meaning (in phenomenological terms: from the telos) and the absolutization of praxis itself. More precisely, when the real movement is dealt with within a theory lacking the telos of communism, a double process of absolutizing theory and praxis obtains. Marcuse gives us a sufficiently clear example of this with his interpretation of Soviet Marxism as the hypostatization of real interests (with respect to present interests) in terms of a praxis disengaged from any subjective foundation. From this perspective all forms of automatic and scientistic Marxism may be understood and criticized[14]—including Althusser's which is a limiting case.

The loss of the telos of communism is manifested in the historical subject's conditions and in his concrete level of consciousness. This telos must be critically reconstituted within specific conditions, i.e., it must be continuously grounded on a level of subjectivity. The telos is not amenable to fixed injections of specific contents, either in the concrete determination of the social type or in the abstract determination of the human type which are proposed in the categorial sense, i.e., as already constituted. We are asked at this point what remains and what changes in the critique: if what remains is the attitude, the methodological position, the disposition in relation to capitalist reality, what changes is reality itself. Yet, it also involves the side of the subject: capitalist reality changes in its movement

14. Marcuse's analysis in *Soviet Marxism* (New York, 1958), is one of the texts which originally in the United States gave rise to critical Marxism in contraposition to "automatic" Marxism. Cf. the theses developed by Paul Piccone in his essay "Verso il Marxism degli Anni '70," in *Aut Aut*, 135, 1973, pp. 1-18.

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along with the level of subjectivity attained by the class during a specific phase and in relation to the continuous recomposition. Ultimately, what also changes is the telos itself whose contents are a function of that level.

However, this answer does not even basically clarify the relation between constancy and variation: why does the attitude remain constant, what is the guarantee of this assertion? Here we find the necessary nexus between critique and foundation, and therefore between critique, foundation and telos. The foundation appears only on the side of the subject. It is revealed only to class consciousness. Yet, it does not remain a subjective given, but it is both subjective and objective. As the young Lukács demonstrated in studying the concept of class consciousness, it is the structure of the capitalist mode of production questioned by the constituting subject. Thus understood, the foundation is always within the object in that it represents its reality: its final level of concreteness. But at the same time, foundation must be subjective because it can only be grounded within a project of subjective totalization.

The problem—which Sartre has not seen—is resolved only by considering as a structure *that particular structure*: a structure as already in itself a *living contradiction* between subjective and objective elements, between operations and results. On the other hand, every attempt to isolate the concept of structure as a system or as a connection of systems (Althusser, Godelier),[15] like every interpretation which attempts to read the contradiction as a philosophical presupposition (material and ontological, cf. Mao's essay *On Contradiction*), falls back inside the Sartrean category of detotalized totality, i.e., of a totality in which the nexus between educated and educator is skipped over and reason is completely displaced (on the side of the object (objectified productive forces).

We can then state that the critique has a simultaneously regressive and progressive course: the loss of either of the two aspects is a loss of the critique's very meaning, i.e., the separation of theory and praxis (which in turn indicates a pause in the revolutionary process). Here reflection does not come about *post festum*, it must function as a guide and as an intentional direction for praxis. Within such a formulation the regressive aspect is the operation whereby the critique manages to grasp the constituting contradicton beneath the apparent object—i.e., the given capitalist phenomenon as it appears. On the other hand, the progressive aspect is equivalent to the reconstitution, beginning on the level of the contradiction,

15. In my judgment this autonomization of the structure obtains also in Bettelheim's basic theoretical position, according to which the relations of production are constituted—as in Althusser—as the subject of the process (and here it falls back into a process without a subject, even if less naively than in Godelier and Althusser). Such an objection is carried to its limit by the Trotskyists of *Critiques de l'Economie Politique*, 7-8, 1972: cf. the essays by Jean-Luc Dallemagne, "Charles Bettelheim ou l'Identification des Contraires," and K. Nair, "Charles Bettelheim Bouleverse la Science," in which the later Bettelheim is criticized as a formalist and foe of historical analysis.

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of an alternative project, of a meaning or telos of communism. This is possible only from within the contradiction and because of its specific character. The subject, in fact, is the contradiction in the sense that the inversion of living and dead, present and past, and also between freedom and necessity (i.e., free time and labor time), actually constitutes social relations, and hence the relation of capitalist production. But it does so in such a way that the relation's development corresponds to an acknowledgement—itself contradictory—of the subjective and living element in the form of its intersubjective and hence social power (social in the subjective sense, as opposed to a fetishistic social relation between things: a series). And it may be noted that this reading of the phenomenon is the most radical kind of empiricism.

Consciousness of the level of the contradiction is therefore the acknowledgement of the level of subjectivity which is real for capital but only potential for communism; i.e., objectively exploited by capital (e.g., in the form of general intellect) and which may be subjectively constituted as the power of revolutionary praxis, hence the meaning of communism. But between this potentiality and this reality connection there is coincidence on one hand and polarity on the other. The realization of potentiality passes through the demolition of the polarity—a demolition of the organized layer of dependency. The dialectical scheme antithesis-synthesis, to which Marx himself refers, here has an explicit ideological function.

In conclusion: foundation and telos vary in relation to content, but persist relatively in the modalities with which the critique constitutes and reconstitutes itself. There is certainly a context of objective possibility, without which Marxism would sink into utopia. But this objective possibility is *not* the possibility that capital has to overcome the reign of necessity (or, in other words, of *rareté*) but, bearing in mind the previously outlined presuppositions, it is a question of possibility founded on the very structure of the capitalist mode of production, i.e., on the ascertainment that the process of fetishization and of autonomization of capital is not a realizable process. Therefore, Marx's discovery of the double character of labor is actually decisive, but we must see what it means:[16] the meaning of

16. The most interesting analysis yet developed of the double character of labor and the nature of abstract labor is Mario Tronti's in "Marx, Forza Lavoro, Classe Operaia," in *Operai e Capitale* (Turin, 1971). He indicates the genesis and function of abstract labor (in relation also to Ricardo and Hegel) starting from the *Doppelcharakter* of labor represented in commodities, and manages to specify the double nature of the working class (struggle against capital and struggle against itself as capital). Nonetheless, at the end of his essay Tronti finds himself facing a dilemma between a change of the type of the activity (refusal of labor) and labor as the first need of life. The question, "In dealing with Marx, if the labor viewpoint follows this road, will it not commit parricide?" reflects a real vacillation in Marx between affirming and negating labor. But Tronti does not seem to be exhaustive concerning the question of communism. Above all, he does not question the double character of labor and loses sight of concrete labor as subjective activity. The whole analysis aims at thematizing

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this discovery, which involves the necessity that capitalist phenomena be divided into an apparent and a real dimension, can be synthesized in the assertion that *fetishism is already contradictory in and of itself* (in that, e.g., no autonomous process of valuation can be given). It reveals the fundamental contradiction implicit in the inability to reduce all subjective activity engaged in labor to abstract activity, i.e., to abstract labor.

Abstract labor, the labor-power commodity that constitutes the working class in itself, is always accompanied by a subjective residue which capital can occlude, but cannot eliminate. In the capitalist mode of production, labor—and this is Marx's discovery—is always concrete activity and abstract labor: to say that it is only abstract labor or only concrete labor is to give two different, but nonetheless ideological, answers. Yet, it is necessary to reinterpret this discovery as it relates to the concrete labor that Marx often refers to (in definitions more than in concrete analyses) as concrete individual labor based on a not yet developed capitalism. The development of capitalism does not imply the falsification of the concept of concrete labor, but its best-grounded assumption as *concrete subjective activity* whose social power always goes beyond the limits posed by capitalist labor (abstract and ordered).

To thematicize this concrete subjective activity in relation to abstract and divided labor, within abstract and divided labor, is to succeed at penetrating the crust of fetishism that the Fragment (tendentiously) shows more and more consistently, to the extent that capital seems to take upon itself all the power of the social individual. It means questioning subjective activity in its revolutionary potentiality. It appears as abstract labor, labor power, a particle of divided labor, but it cannot be reduced to a labor-thing. Already within capitalism it is constituted as a social individual who projects new needs in terms of the objective possibility to develop them.

Thus, thematizing the contradiction implies a refutation of labor as capitalist labor and a radical critique of capital's command over labor, while at the same time also a thorough vindication of concrete subjective activity that passes through and not over production. Theoretically, it is a question of recovering the meaning of the critique by recovering the Marxian concept of concrete labor: to recover it means to liberate it from the naturalistic mortgage that emerges every time Marx fixes it as such, as use value, or as labor process,[17] and corresponds to the ambiguity noticed

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abstract labor by rendering the other aspect secondary, or even eliminating it as if, ultimately, capitalism were only abstract labor's supersession of concrete labor. This is true, and allows us to grasp the foundation of the working class in capital. But it is also true that the concrete aspect of labor is preserved as an aspect of the contradiction, and it is only upon the reappropriation of this aspect that it seems possible to found a new type of activity. Without this clarification the formula of the refusal of labor is easily open to misunderstandings.

17. Concerning the naturalistic risk of the Marxian analysis of use value and of the labor process, cf. Roberta Tomassini, "Bisogno e Valore d'Uso in Marx," *Aut Aut*, 134, 1973.

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in connection with the theory of progress. Without this basis, which is the layer of subjectivity in the course of socialization within capitalist development, every hypothesis concerning the subject necessarily becomes a subjectivistic one, once again separating theory and praxis.

Therefore, the leaps that can be observed in the course of Marx's exposition in the Fragment and the double track of discourse that it is possible to individuate in it lead, on the one hand, to a crushing of the contradiction to just the objective dimension as a tendency to simultaneously create disposable time and surplus labor, so that ultimately the growth of productive forces can *no longer* be bound up to the appropriation of someone else's surplus labor. The contradiction appears only internal to things and can then become the theme of a comprehensive theory of reality while retaining the specific point of departure, i.e., the contrast between productive forces and relations of production. On the other hand, the theme of communism, cut loose from its foundation, runs the risk of becoming a utopian theme: "Individuals are then in a position to develop freely. It is no longer a question of reducing the necessary labor time in order to create surplus labor, but of reducing the necessary labor of society to a minimum. The counterpart of this reduction is that all members of society can develop their education in the arts, sciences, etc., thanks to the free time and means available to all."[18] Without the foundation of the *new type* of activity through the transformation of labor into a subjective (or "personal," in the language of *The German Ideology*) mode of activity, the leap—or the separation—between necessity and freedom is reaffirmed. We find an example of this in all of Marcuse's formulations and in particular in his later writings: the separation between the reality-principle and the pleasure-principle flow together in an analysis of communism as the alternative need relative to the entire complex of relations between man, nature and society. It follows that all important and provocative indications tied to this perspective fail to be disengaged from the initial idea of a separation of qualitative needs from material needs, rather than attempting to characterize a global modification of activity. The reductive logic of freedom/necessity is accepted as soon as we pose ourselves within the perspective of the overcoming of labor.

But Marx knew that the free development of individuals passes through the development of social relations and that these are only the means for capital, even more so for advanced capital: "Productive forces and social relationships—the two different sides of the development of the social individual—appear to be, and are, only a *means* for capital, to enable it to produce from its own cramped base. But in fact they are the material conditions that will shatter this foundation."[19] The utopia of the free

18. Marx, *The Grundrisse, op.cit.*, p. 142. Nicolaus trans., p. 706.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 143; Nicolaus trans., p. 706.

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development of individuals is no longer so, if communism is seen as a radical altering of the mode of producing, if one passes—by means of a revolutionary break—from the production of commodities to the production of new social relations: the social individual himself seen as the product of an activity that has a totally different object and end. The utopian error remains in separating the purpose from the object and believing that the goal may be given and realized outside of production.

The capitalist contradiction and communism are sides of the same dialectic. Thus, if on the one hand it is completely concrete, to escape the utopian risk, to insist on the fact that the fundamental contradiction between workers and capital is the main object of the critique, on the other hand precisely this thematization implies an intentional analysis of communism so as not to fall back in turn into objectivism. As Negri has indicated,[20] the solution can pass through the relation between contradiction at the present level and subjective reappropriation. In this perspective the refusal of labor can only signify the intentional reassumption of labor in terms of a new productive activity which constitutes itself on a nonfetishized social relation. The thematization of the social relation as a telos seems to be the best way to unmask the equivocation of the leap between the material level and the qualitative one, between necessity and freedom, and consequently to furnish an unequivocal meaning for Marx's expression "free development of individuals."

20. Of the many themes in Negri's essay (*op.cit.*, see note 3), the relation between tendency, subject and communism seems to be the one of greatest theoretical interest: the antagonism of the present situation is understood in the contrast between "communist will of the masses and the command of the enterprise" (p. 164) where communist will is the horizon of subjectivity within the tendency, labor's totalizing reply to the totalization of capital. "In fact, the contradiction again reveals the working class as the historical subject of the tendency, and shows this not only as an antagonistic activity or as a possibility for subversion, but also as a world and a new subjectivity creating itself in a social, communist, manner" (p. 151). Negri's reading of the "Fragment" (which also underestimates its ambiguous elements) shows precisely the constitution of subjectivity through the appropriation of productivity and the subsequent development of the social individual as a "universal" individual: "the labor of this individuality appears no longer as labor, but as the integral development of activity itself, in which natural necessity in its immediate form has disappeared because an historically produced need is introduced into natural need" (p. 172). The expansion of historical needs (which Marx insisted on in various places throughout the *Grundrisse*) and the rise of a new concept of productive labor qualitatively define the emerging new historical subject. On the whole, the contradiction thus turns into an antagonism.

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The Contours and Coupures of Structuralist Theory

by Robert D'Amico

Foucault has spoken recently of the profound disruption in the domain of knowledge at every level of contemporary theory. "From the beginning of this century psychoanalytic, linguistic and ethnographic research has ousted the subject from the laws of his desires, from the forms of his speech, from the rules of his actions and from the systems of his mythical discourses."[1] It has become increasingly more important to deal with the thrust of these developments at the level of theory, not under the rubric of some "structuralist" ideology, but as to their true content and meaning. The obstruction until now has been its lack of a "history". The origins of this significant shift in theoretical activity has remained hidden and confused. Moreover, the closer one gets to the names within this new "geneaology" of dominant thought the less there appears to be any connecting links or common tendencies. For all this, there is no denying the reality of the shift. If the analogy can be drawn, the style of *Les Temps Modernes* which, in the immediate post-war period, defined the framework of debate and philosophic inquiry, has been displaced by the theory whose *problematique* is the journal *Annales*. From the hybrid forms of philosophies of existence, written with journalistic immediacy, we now have the hegemony of highly technical, synthetic works, basing themselves on epistemological and methodological advances in the human sciences and oriented toward esoteric research far from the "tempo" of everyday life. With the wane of Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, French thought finds itself in the grip of Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Deleuze, Lacan, Althusser and Foucault, who seem to combine an incredibile diversity of materials with a common insistence, with recurring refrains.

The object of this paper is merely to draw the lines of this new thought both as to its roots and the various directions or alternative approaches. In all this it must be tentative, but if this involves problems seemingly far from these current thinkers, that is what remains underlying and unsaid: their formative history. In a recent special issue of *Annales* on "History and Structure" Burguière has defined the convergence. "At this level, structuralism has never constituted a school. It has simply been the manifestation of the convergence of a certain number of investigations, some very old (comparative mythology, general linguistics) others recent (structural anthropology and semiology) provisionally reunited by the demands of similar methods..this approach has been familiar to (historians) for a long time. Structure was for them, first a means of

1. M. Foucault, "Gênéaologie des Sciences," *Cahiers Pour l'Analyse*, no. 9 (Summer, 1968), p. 12.

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approach, approximate of course, permitting knowledge of imperceptible movements, to integrate into history that which seemed beyond time. *The anterior life of structuralism is inseparable from the history of Annales."*[2] If one can expand Marx's statement in *The German Ideology* that Hegel was made possible by the previous achievements of German historiography, then it is French historiography, including, however, the revolutions in ethnography and linguistics (and earlier in the emergence of psychoanalysis), that stands behind the recent creative outburst of theory in France and apart from which the new theory is unintelligible.

Undoubtably, the key event in this development was the foundation in 1947 of the *Sixième Section* of the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* under the direction of Lucien Febvre. Much as phenomenology had entered France, the pre-World War II period saw Febvre and Marc Bloch using German sociology and historiography (especially *Verstehen* theory) to fight against the university-entrenched traditions of "diplomatic history."[3] Febvre had dealt with the role of mentality and consciousness in history, especially as they played a role in forming the super-structural configuration of a social period. In a historicist approach he examined the "mental tools" of a given age as the constraints of mentality imposed by historical and social determination. His famous work on the possibility of atheism at a certain point in history, *Le probleme de l'incroyance au XVIe siecle, la religion de Rabelais,* utilizes an approach that has since been extended by Foucault, especially through the concept of an "archaeology of language."[4] Marc Bloch not only shared this interest in collective mentality and consciousness but attempted to root historical studies in life activity by adopting the viewpoint of the *productive* social group. Thus, he studied feudalism through the farming activities of the serfs or agrarian history.[5] These works aimed at a synthetic history with an emphasis on vast collective movements in which man was made intelligible within society and historical life. The effort was necessarily immense and heuristic, and new areas had to be

2. A. Burguière, "Histoire et Structure," *Annales*, no. 31 (May-June, 1971), p. 1.

3. The following comments, of course, cannot hope to convey the full range or significance of the *Annales* tradition. I am indebted, however, to Georg Iggers for giving me the the opportunity to see his manuscript on the history of *Annales* up to its present representatives. This important work will appear as a special issue of *History and Theory* in the Winter of 1973.

4. M. Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York, 1971). This book is a discussion of historiography deeply influenced by the work of *Annales*: especially apparent is its central category, the "archive." However, Foucault presupposes the readers' familiarity with this background and proceeds in a dense and impenetrable style.

5. Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* Vol. I and II, trans. L.A. Manyon (Chicago, 1961) and *French Rural History* (Berkeley, 1966). The tendency of *Annales* has been to integrate larger and larger dimensions of social life into history, especially areas that had previously been treated as naturally or organically ahistorical. As Burke said in a recent issue, "In the course of the last 15 years history has laid claim to sectors of human activity which, until then, were considered unchangeable. For example, we see that childhood (Aries), climate (Le Roy Ladurie) and Madness (Foucault), all three, have a history." Peter Burke, "L'Histoire sociale des rêves," *Annales*, no. 2 (March-April, 1973), p. 329.

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investigated. The effort reached its peak of influence in French intellectual life under the directorship of Ferdinand Braudel. It is at this crucial period of the early 50s that the influence of linguistics and ethnography began to be felt, marked by the entrance of Lévi-Strauss and his associates into the *Sixième Section.* This hybridization proved effective and has been carried on by such thinkers as Foucault, Godelier and Barthes. This starting point is essential and must be elaborated.

In a specific sense, though at different levels, the approaches of Lévi-Strauss and Braudel are closer than any others and represent the basic lines of influence. Braudel had faced two problems in assessing and articulating the achievements of Febvre and Bloch. The first, of course, as he constantly reiterates, was striking at the reduction of "history" to the scholastic meaning that had been given it by mere chroniclers. The transformation of historical writing would then require a transformation in research and study. But in addition, Braudel had the second problem of invading other carefully compartmentalized disciplines. It was clear to Braudel that the synthetic-structural history he envisioned was qualitatively different from what went on before. Not only were the conceptions and practices of sociology, social psychology and ethnography within its domain, but so were the more remote fields of linguistics, statistics and qualitative mathematics.[6] Lévi-Strauss, on the other hand, faced the same developments but in the opposite direction. Far from trying to expand ethnography, Lévi-Strauss had to resolve the question of its definition as a separate science so as to save it from subsumption and fragmentation by other disciplines. This involved defining the concept of its object so that it could be grasped as distinct from all other objects of knowledge just as Saussure had done for linguistics. However, in specifically defining ethnography's object, Lévi-Strauss was lead to the same point that Braudel had raised in history: i.e., that the emergence within the human sciences of linguistics provided a *model* as well as the tools for this purpose. Whether it was the "archaeology" of texts, archives or mentalities, they all constituted *signs* whose meaning had to be deciphered and whose system uncovered.[7]

Lévi-Strauss' research is divided into two parts, one on kinship relations and the other on mythology. The approach, though significantly modified and refined, has followed a guiding thread.[8] These phenomena are not a

6. The convergence of these diverse areas into a structuralist methodology is discussed at length in Piaget's excellent summary *Structuralism* (New York, 1971).

7. The concepts of sign and semiology are taken in the meaning given them by Saussure. Cf. Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics* (New York, 1959).

8. "[T]wo stages in the same undertaking, what might be defined as a kind of inventory of mental constraints, an attempt to reduce the arbitrary to order...in *Les Structures* I had chosen a domain which might appear at first to be characterized by incoherence and contingency, and which I tried to show could be reduced to a very small number of significant propositions. However, this first experiment was insufficient, because the constraints in the domain of kinship are not of a purely internal order. By this, I mean that it is not certain that

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heterogeneous collection of events and practices, nor are they pre-logical or intuitive. They are characterized by their systematic nature, having laws and transformation rules of a highly elaborate and complex structure which is neither visible nor conscious. The function of a science is to conceptually construct the combinations of these structures and thus grasp all possible logical variations. Lévi-Strauss describes this in *The Savage Mind:* "All that I claim to have shown so far is, therefore, that the dialectic of superstructures, like that of language, consists in setting up *constitutive units* (which, have to be defined... by contrasting them in pairs) so as to be able by means of them to elaborate a system which plays the part of a synthesizing operator between ideas and facts, thereby turning the latter into *signs*. The mind thus passes from empirical diversity to conceptual simplicity and then from conceptual simplicity to meaningful sythesis."[9]

In his semi-autobiographical work *Tristes Tropiques,* Lévi-Straus indicates the three major influences on his thought, and they are indeed symptomatic of the new tradition. His three "mistresses", as he calls them, are geography, Marxism and psychoanalysis. Geography is conceived as the "temporal" link to anthropology. The landscape is the "master key" for the study of society. If, as he argues later, history is ultimately "irreducible contingency" and societies "machines for possible combinations", then all change is a product of externally imposed determinations. "Unlike the history of historians, history as the geologist and the psychoanalyst sees it, is intended to [examine]...certain fundamental properties of the physical and psychical universe."[10] As for Marxism, a relation which grows in complexity within these developments, Lévi-Strauss follows the distinction of infrastructure and superstructure in defining his own research. It is Marx's anti-empiricist conception of social relations and the grounding of social theory on the mode of production that Lévi-Strauss takes as scientific. "Social relations are no more based on events than physics is based on sense-perceptions."[11] Finally, in the formation of the concept of the unconscious one learns that not only are the structures not visible, but that the determining practices, orders, signs and symbols are not at the conscious level. From the collection of essays, *Structural Anthropology,* we get the following formulation. "If, as we believe to be the case, the unconscious activity of the mind consists in imposing form upon content,

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their origin is drawn exclusively from structures of the mind (*ésprit*); they might arise from the exigencies of social life... The second stage, to be completely devoted to mythology, will be an attempt to avoid this obstacle, since it seems to me that it is precisely in the domain of mythology, where mind seems most free to abandon itself to its own creative spontaneity, that it is significant to establish its conformity to law. As far as kinship and marriage rules are concerned, it might be asked whether the constraints come from within or without; the doubt is no longer possible as far as mythology is concerned." Lévi-Strauss, "A Confrontation: An Interview," *New Left Review,* no. 61 (July-August, 1970), p. 59.

9. Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago, 1968), p. 131.
10. *Tristes Tropiques,* trans. John Russel (New York, 1969), pp. 60-61.
11. *Ibid.,* p. 61.

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and if these forms are fundamentally the same for all minds—it is necessary and sufficient to grasp the unconscious structure underlying each institution and each custom, in order to obtain a principle of interpretation valid for other institutions and customs."[12]

In approaching his own research at the theoretical level, Lévi-Strauss had to articulate the relation between history and ethnography, which he does by sharply separating the disciplines. "It is to this theory of superstructures, scarcely touched on by Marx, that I hope to make a contribution. The development of the study of infrastructure proper is a task that must be left to history—with the aid of demography, technology, historical geography and ethnography."[13] At one level this seems to give the hegemony to history with regard to the social sciences, the same theme Braudel uses in his article on the "long duration" through the reform of historical practice so that "it is in relation to such vast expanses of slow-moving history and to the infra-structure that the totality of history is to be rethought."[14] But Lévi-Strauss' precise limitation of ethnography does not lead to a unification of the human sciences but to the abstract opposition between structure-system and history. Predictably, this produces an abstract and static conception of both sides of the opposition. Thus, while declaring that the social sciences must seek lawful relations between phenomena, Lévi-Strauss suddenly reduces all of history to accidental events: "irreducible contingency." On the other hand, structure is transported to the heavens of formalism as it is given an absolute, innate origin in the "structure of all structures", or the "order of orders", which is envisioned as the organic structure of the mind (the structure of the being who structures).[15] Thus, we see reappearing in his thought the very two positions that Lévi-Strauss continually battles against: empiricism and formalism. First, to view history as an accidental series of unrelated events is to capitulate to the crudest kind of empiricism. Second, this abstract concept of history produces as its opposite a conception of structure lacking content and determination: an arbitrary and subjective *model.* In searching and careful "de-construction" of Lévi-Strauss' system, Sperber notes that his research rests on the arbitrary transition from the formulation of tentative "models" to their indentification as the sole determining structures. "When one has a family of constructs which are models: when one can define transformations on the family that leave the family unchanged...: when finally these transformations themselves have the status of models...one then has a remarkable product, susceptible to bring about beautiful generalizations. But, it does not provide, in advance

12. *Structural Anthropology*, trans. C. Jacobson and B.G. Schoef (New York, 1967), p. 21.
13. *The Savage Mind*, p. 130.
14. F. Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences," in *Economy and Society in Early Modern Europe: Essays from Annales*, ed. Peter Burke (New York, 1971), pp. 11-42.
15. *Structural Anthropology*, pp. 305-306.

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through epistemology alone, that the generality always leads to such structural relations between models."[16] Thus, Sperber concludes that there is a disjunction between the technical level of the method and the quality of its results. "If structural research has been able to progress with much more specific instruments than is methodologically necessary, it is in satisfying criteria of adequation much too vague. The analyses produced are not for all that bad, far from it, but...[they] remain, at the same time, intuitive and arbitrary. It is scarcely possible to clearly validate the results." [17] Badiou has been more blunt in a recent criticism which views Lévi-Strauss as merely one more variant of bourgeois ideology in which some contemplative epistemology produces the empiricism-formalism circle,[18] or more generally leaves shrouded in mystery the relation between the order of its concepts and the non-conceptual, material conditions. The solution in Lévi-Strauss confers to cerebral complexity the dignity of structure of which then leads to reductionism. "At the limit reduction is achieved if one can construct a model of the activity of the constructor of models. It is the regulative myth of this epistemology. It clarifies the strange texts where Lévi-Strauss confers to cerebral complexity the dignity of structure of structures, ultimate support of 'structuralism' itself. In the face of that object, one will interpret the construction of a model from cerebral functioning, an 'artificial brain': as cybernetics aspire to, for which always the ideology of models is its spontaneous philosophy...For the epistemology of models, science is not the practical transformation of reality, but the fabrication of a plausible image."[19]

Now, returning to Braudel, we will see an attempt to deepen and mediate the concept of time so as to produce a more concrete concept of history than its being the "otherness" of structure. However, though this is more fruitful than Lévi-Strauss' approach, it also fails to deal with the active, practical dimension of theory, which is the basis of Marx's critique of epistemology. To begin with, Braudel is dissatisfied with Lévi-Strauss' position that history is merely the generation of "entropy" and, therefore, there are societies which have no history in the sense that they do not internalize time within their social functions. Braudel suggests instead that history consists of different temporalities and that the most immediate temporal experience, the perceivable fluxuation of events, is neither the sole temporal determination nor the most important. He concludes that the empirical measure of time is arbitrary and restrictive and that, contrary to accepted historical practice, time has vertical, as well as horizontal, dimensions. "Is it possible somehow to convey simultaneously both the

16. Dan Sperber, "Le Structuralisme en Anthropologie," in *Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme?* ed. Francois Wahl (Paris, 1968), p. 228.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 232.
18. A. Badiou, *Le Concept de Modele* (Paris, 1970).
19. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

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conspicuous history which holds our attention by its continued and dramatic changes—and that other, submerged history, almost silent and always discreet, virtually unsuspected either by its observers or its participants, which is little touched by the obstinate erosion of time? Historians have over the years grown accustomed to describing this contradiction in terms of *structure* and *conjuncture,* the former denoting long-term, the latter, short-term realities. Clearly there are different kinds of structure just as there are different kinds of conjuncture, and the duration of either structure or conjuncture may in turn vary. History accepts and discovers multidimensional explanations, reaching, as it were, vertically from one temporal plane to another. And on every plane there are also horizontal relationships and connections."[20]

As a critique of empiricism this is the methodological approach of the "abstract-concrete" in that the empirical immediacy of observation ceases to be the origin of theory; rather, it is the concrete, as the synthesis of mediations, which is the basis for theoretical conceptions. "The concrete is concrete, because it is a combination of many determinations, i.e., a unity of diverse elements. In our thought, it therefore appears as a process of synthesis, as a result, and not as a starting point, although it is the real starting point and therefore, also the starting point of observation and conception."[21]

To understand Braudel's interpretation of this methodology a brief digression on the concept of conjecture is necessary. The problem is that the structuralist approach seems to leave history with a modified indeterminacy principle. That is, the deeper the history, the less concrete information there is, even though this level is most important. On the other hand, most information comes from a level of history, day to day events, which is least important.[22] Thus one can either be concerned with "political," practical history and ignore the deeper dimensions which do not change so immediately or simply, or one concentrates on "structural" history without regard to acting upon the direction of historical change. In a recent article Vilar, who is both a Marxist and member of *Annales*, argues that conjuncture is the mediating factor between history and activity.[23] Both Vilar and

20. F. Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II,* Vol. I, trans. S. Reynolds (New York, 1972), p. 16. This book originally published in 1949 was the first major work of the *Annales* group as such and has become a classic example of their work. It is discussed at some length in Sartre's *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* (Paris, 1960), pp. 236-261.

21. Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. David McLellan (London, 1971), p. 45.

22. "Biographical and anecdotal history is the least explanatory: but it is the richest in point of information; for it considers the individuals in their particularity... This information [however] is schematized, put in the background and finally done away with as one passes to histories of progressively greater 'power'. Consequently, depending on the level on which he places himself, the historian loses in information what he gains in comprehension or vice versa, as if the logic of the concrete wished to remind us of its logical nature by modelling a confused outline of Godel's theorem in the clay of 'becoming'." *The Savage Mind.*, p. 261.

23. Pierre Vilar, "Histoire marxiste, histoire en construction. Essai de dialogue avec

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Braudel refer in this context to the work of Labrousse and his study of the French revolution in which the depressions, lasting from 1774 to 1791, are the "key" to the political conjuncture of July, 1789.[24] As Vilar interprets Labrousse's work, the French revolution is seen as the "collision" between the long term economic progress of the eighteenth century, an "intercycle" of depressions from 1774-1788, and the short-term effects of price inflations in 1789. Thus we have the picture of the following "interlacing" cycles: Originally, there is the cycle of the feudal mode of production, characterized by an agricultural base, undeveloped technology of production, and direct appropriation of the producer's labor, founded on the physical control of land areas. This can be called a precapitalist "tempo." But it comes to co-exist with an emergent "industrial cycle" characterized by a long period of primitive capitalist accumulation (creating a monied bourgeoisie and an embourgeoisified nobility), commercial depressions in prices and markets which have the effect of "freeing" the market from feudal constraints, and the short-term "breakdown" of feudal production in the form of scarcity, famine and rebellion against feudal appropriation. Thus, Vilar concludes, "the 'collision' of 'specific temporalities' leads, in July-August 1789, to the 'event' which overturns the juridical and political structure of society, it is the most beautiful example one could wish for of an 'interlacing of times' as the process of the development of a mode of production, seen as the process of the passage of one mode to another."[25]

The problem with Vilar's suggestion is that it accounts for the political only as the "mechanical" effect of cycles interfering with one another, which leads either to the view that practical, political activity is "automatic" or the *effect* of a change that has autonomously taken place. Braudel, on the other hand, not only argues that conjuncture does not explain political history, but attacks Labrousse's work because it tries to resolve the conjuncture into short-term history, the empiricism of eventism. "Here we are again in the short-term, up to our necks. Of course, the attempt is permissible and useful, but how symptomatic it is! The Historian loves the role of theatrical director. How could he abandon the drama of the short-term and give up the best tricks of the age-old trade."[26] Thus, Braudel shifts full emphasis to the "long duration" or structure. With reference to Levi-Strauss, Braudel defines it as, "something that is architectural: but beyond that it means a reality which can distort the effect of time, changing its scope and speed... As obstacles, they act as limitations ('envelopes' in the mathematical sense) from which man and his

Althusser," *Annales*, no. 28 (1973), pp. 165-198.

24. E. Labrousse, *La crise de l'economie francaise a la fin de l'Ancien Regime et au debut de la Revolution*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1946).

25. Vilar, *op.cit.*, p. 185.

26. Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences," *op.cit.*, p. 17.

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experience can never escape. Just think of the difficulty of breaking down certain geographic frameworks, biological facts or barriers to productivity and even certain constraints of a cultural order (mental frameworks, too, are long-term prisons)."[27] These structures can exhibit a *relative* permanence, such as geographic or biological constraints, and constitute for Braudel the "infra-structure" in which the "totality of history is to be rethought." At the other extreme is the short-term event—chronicler's or journalist's time—which exists merely as the surface phenomena of deep structure history. "Anyone can see that there is a short time period for all forms of life whether economic, social, literary, institutional, religious, geographic or political."[28] Of course, these "temporalities" are not separate and isolated levels but they are continually mediated to constituted a "dialectic of duration"[29] exhibited by middle or mediational time, connecting surface events to their historical depth. This, according to Braudel's program, would be the place of social history, i.e., the formation of groups, economic cycles, demographic changes, wars, etc. "A new mode of historical narrative is emerging which we may call the narrative of the 'conjuncture', the cycle, or even the 'intercycle'; it offers a choice of periods... The point is that the historian has at his disposal a new time period, taking the shape of an explanatory scheme in which history may be placed in accordance with landmarks as yet unknown and the very pulse of the curves we have just mentioned...the inquiry will inevitably result in the identification of social 'conjuncture' (and even structure) while there is nothing to assure us in advance that such conjunctures will move at the same speed as economic ones."[30] Though Braudel does not succumb to the mechanistic interpretation of Vilar, he assumes a level of objectivity by resting on the semi-immobile dimensions of history and therefore grasping the differentiations of temporality as standing in opposition to practical activity—since activism can only effect the surface events. Thus, the apolitical character of this approach is based not only on a view of history, which moves virtually autonomously, but is seen as an autonomy which is not merely imposed by historical conditions, but is epistemologically rooted in its mode of knowledge.[31] Aside from this presumption, which we have already seen in one form in Lévi-Strauss, this approach, and the work of *Annales*, offered valuable tools to Marxists struggling against economism

27. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
29. Cf. Gaston Bachelard, *Dialectique de la Durée* (Paris, 1950).
30. Braudel, *op.cit.*, p. 16.
31. "Unconscious history is of course the history of the unconscious forms of all social life. 'Men make history, but are not aware of doing so.' Marx's statement illuminates the problem, but does not explain it. In fact the whole problem of the short-term, 'micro-time' and the event, is with us once more... Men have always had the impression that the passage of time as lived by them is gained as things happen from day to day. Is not such conscious, clear history inadequate...?" *Ibid.*, p. 26.

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and reductionism, with its crude and simplistic explanation of superstructural and ideological elements. It became even clearer that dogmatic Marxism was a regression to pre-Marxist conceptions and had not even reached the level of the most advanced segments of bourgeois thought. As Godelier recently put it: "Authentic Marxism, however, does not pre-judge the form and content of real economic relations in the various societies known to history. Their modes of production are not objects available for direct cognition through experience, but realities which have to be 'recognized' by discovering them where the vulgar and abstract conceptions of society and economy do not accompany them—that is, also in the functioning of political, religions, or kinship relations. A mode of production is not reducible to the subsistence activities of a society, but is a complex reality that has to be 'reproduced,' reconstructing its content by thought."[32]

The discovery of "structure" produces two contrary results in the production of knowledge, which is really the same effect seen in two ways. Structure has no relation to an ideological opposition between permanence and change, rather it grasps simultaneously the couple, continuity-discontinuity. Most immediately, structure is seen as something continuous, the stable, the semi-permanent, but as it relates to the priority of the whole. Thus as one recognizes that variation and change are always constrained, always occur within a framework and with regard to history, there arises a distinction between the reality and the appearance of historical transformation. The simple flux of an endless series of events gives way to their "logic." But at the same time, the effect destroys the ideological continuity and homogeneity of phenomena.

One sees this clearly in Marx's approach to political economy. The a-historicity of the "market exchange" grounds the permanence of bourgeois relations and the eternity of the commodity. But, suddenly Marx reveals it as a recent invention, and the quiet levelling of history is broken by the violent transformation of social relations, which becomes all the more catastrophic and rapid as society intensifies appropriation and productivity. Thus, the discovery of the commodity represents both aspects at once. It is the eruption of history into bourgeois social relations, and therefore the mark of their mortality and impermanence, while it is also the *truth* of the diversity of products, that they have no differences, they are changeless changes. That, in fact, against bourgeois society's view of itself, all production is in reality the production of the *same* thing; surplus value. Thus, commodity fetishism is not simply one form of concealment, it is the whole of ideological notions that allows at one moment to evoke the commodity's permanence, and at the other to evoke its infinite diversity. By

32. M. Godelier, *Rationality and Irrationality in Economy*, trans. Brian Pearce (London, 1972), p. xxvii.

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utilizing the Hegelian categories of immediacy and mediation Marx tried to grasp this dialectic. Imprisoned within immediacy we assume the false independence of isolated facts, of the given, only to have that reversed by discovery of the real determinations through the detour of reflection and mediation. But the concept produced by the mediational synthesis is still a concept *produced*, dialectically bound to its conditions. "This example of labour strikingly shows how even the most abstract categories, *in spite of their applicability to all epochs*—just because of their abstract character—are by the very definiteness of their abstraction a product of historical conditions as well, and are fully applicable only to and under those conditions."[33] Thus Marx holds a "historicist" understanding of the production of concepts, and by linking labor and *praxis* as human activity there is still hope that the "autonomy" of history can be broken in both theory and practice. In fact, in a prophetic quote not only does Marx warn against the false generality of economic categories but shows the connection to the historicity of human desire, which is always for Marx the assurance of a "direction" to history and the determinacy of practical activity. "For the object is not simply an object in general, but a definite object, which is consumed in a certain definite manner prescribed in its turn by production. Hunger is hunger; but the hunger that is satisfied with cooked meat eaten with fork and knife is a different kind of hunger from the one that devours raw meat with the aid of hands, nails and teeth."[34]

Theoretical production produces at one level "structures," at another level "coupures," and they are both concealed by the "play" of appearances. That is, either false generalities conceal the reality of historical transformations of social life or the opiate of immediacy, fixates and fascinates consciousness with simply a new form of appropriation, exploitation and alienation. In both cases they are broken, theoretically, by the rejection of empiricism; *but* either vertically, which produces the recognition of the discontinuity of phenomena, its specificity (labor, production, consumption, etc.), the "coupure"; or horizontally, which produces the hidden reason, the "ruse," the logic behind an unintelligible diversity of experiences (commodity fetishism), the "structure." Aries, with no emphasis on the political, does give an excellent blend of these contraries in the reconstruction of social history. "The dialectic of past and present can be safely neglected by the historians of 'short periods' but it must be used in the study of manners and feelings whose variations extend over a 'long period.' This is the case with the family... It is possible...to argue that the family partakes of the immobility of the species. On the other hand, the great demographic revolution in the West...has revealed to us considerable possibilities of change in structure hitherto believed to be invariable because they were biological... I accordingly looked back into our past to

33. Marx, *op.cit.*, p. 50.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

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find out whether the idea of the family had not been born comparatively recently, at a time when the family freed itself from both biology and law to become a value, a theme of expression, an occasion for emotions." Thus, an important change in function puts one in suspicion of how that change *appears* as it is socially mediated. "It seemed to me that, on the contrary, the family occupied a tremendous place in our industrial society, and that it had perhaps never before exercised so much influence on the human condition. The legal weakening proved only that the idea (and the reality) did not follow the same curve as the institution."[35]

Though the criticisms and lines of influence that have been discussed thus far concern social history, a similar pattern appears in other areas, where structuralist methodology has been applied: literary theory being the best example.[36] However, the advantages of the methodological approach, especially as it deals with complex, multi-dimensional processes without recourse to reductionist or linear theories of causality, is accompanied by analyses that appear arbitrary and artificial, if not finally divorced from all but mechanical and functional human activity. Braudel seems to hint at this. "Let us admit, too,...that such unconsciousness may...be...scientifically richer—that is to say, simpler, easier to exploit, if not reveal. But distinguishing between the clear surface and the dark depths, between noises and silence, is difficult and chancy. Let us add that 'unconscious history' as a field related to conjunctural time, and, above all, to structural time, is often more clearly perceived than people will admit...there is, beyond one's own life, a mass history, whose strength and impulses are perhaps more easily recognized than its laws or direction."[37] The artificiality and arbitrariness rests on two problems. First, beside the vague reference to "vast dimensions of slow-moving history" there is no grasp of the foundation of these temporal differentiations or historical directions. Also within Braudel, and many of the *Annales* historians, the suggestion of biological or geographic constraints not only raises wholly ideological conditions but an ideology which has already been concretely negated by the latest stages of capitalism and its alliance with advanced technology. But this lack of any "radical" analysis of historical direction in the *present* points to the more serious problem of the possibility of rational activity in the course of historical transitions. Marx's historical studies continually depend on a "historicistic" understanding of the relation between conscious activity and the development of material conditions in history. Marx continually emphasizes that capitalism only succeeds in its level of appropriation and alienation by separating labor from all biological and

35. P. Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of the Family* (New York, 1962), p. 10.

36. Cf. R. Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* (Boston, 1970) and the recent article by Umberto Eco, "Social Life as a Sign System," in *Structuralism: An Introduction*, ed. David Roley (Oxford, 1972), p. 57.

37. Braudel, *op.cit.*, pp. 26-27.

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"natural" constraints. This is the historical condition for the "abstraction" of labor which also means the raising of consciousness to that level requisite for *both* overcoming alienation and eliminating material scarcity. Thus history is invested with a distinct teleology in which the gradual building up of universal alienation and productivity simultaneously universalizes the act of liberation. Though Marx accepts the historicity of human nature (including human desire and want), it is also a historicity characterized by increasing diversity, complexity, refinement and liberating potential.

The basic thrust of the *structuralist* critiques, even when aligned with Marxism, goes against these assumptions in two ways: (1) the concept of the unconscious and (2) the critique of linear, teleological history. First, the unconscious represents not merely the sum of activities that lie beyond our awareness but the fact that the whole of interpretative or active forms of behavior are already mediated and structured.[38] If the raising of consciousness means the hope for some vantage point in which consciousness can grasp its object in such a way that there is an identity between activity and knowledge, then that is an illusion, by the very nature of consciousness. Second, the linearity of history, which has dominated Western thought, is displaced to historical depth not characterized by increasing productivity, increasing rationality or progress. Rather, one discovers survivals, cyclical returns, changes that are non-simultaneous, and the weight of a "mass history" over man's conscious understanding.

For those committed to revolutionary activity the problem was to retain what was positive in Marxism, while still applying the pertinence of these criticisms, without resigning oneself to a history literally "made from below." There have been two tendencies in this alignment of some form of structuralist approach and Marxism. One turns to cultural dimensions, with emphasis on the studies of superstructures as they function in a theory of semiology (signs and communication), so as to give more control and determinacy to those aspects in which man actively forms his cultural life. The other turns to the concept of "mode of production" as the foundation for all historical analysis and which provides a way back to a classical theory of class struggle in history. The first cannot be fully covered here, since we are looking at the basis of this new methodology for social history. Yet certain remarks are pertinent.[39]

38. "Marxism, if not Marx himself, has too commonly reasoned as though practices followed directly from *praxis*. Without questioning the undoubted primacy of the infra-structures, I believe that there is always a mediator between *praxis* and practices, namely the conceptual schema by the operation of which matter and form . . . are realized as structures, that is, entities which are both empirical and intelligible." *The Savage Mind*, p. 130.

39. The following brief points relate mainly to works that have attempted to use semiology as a mode of cultural and ideological analysis. For example, Lucien Sebag, whose *Marxisme et Structuralisme* (Paris, 1964) is, however, closer to Goldmann's genetic structuralism than Lévi-Strauss' conceptions. Also Lévi-Strauss' *Race and History* (New York, 1955), including his debate with M. Rodinson that took place in the journal *La Nouvelle Critique* and reviewed by Lévi-Strauss in *Structural Anthropology*, pp. 338-341. Of course, the best example is R.

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This approach, rooted in Lévi-Strauss' work, as well as the development of structural linguistics and semiology in France, has had some measure of success with the analysis of ideology and social consciousness. However it tends toward an ahistoric basis which leads to the discovery of symbols, assumed to be relatively permanent, rooted in the unconscious which is again taken to be the same for all men "ancient and modern." What is produced, then, is the reification, or abstract generalization, of the specific ideological symbols mediating a given social structure, whether that be the logic of kinship relations or the Oedipus complex.[40] Ultimately they are ascribed to "mental constraints," in Lévi-Strauss' sense of the structure of the giver of structure, or the "order of order." Also, though nominally Marxist, when fully politically the approach turns to a weak form of "culture critique" either basing itself on the innate superiority of the "primitive" (thus attacking modern culture through its relativity) or a simple cynical debunking of contemporary "myths," but suspended above any specific political or social analysis.

In the case, however, of using the "mode of production" as a basis (Althusser, Godelier and Balibar), we have a more fully articulated attempt to "complete" Marx while holding to the razor's edge between the reductionism and determinism of economistic interpretations and an insubstantial attack upon culture and superstructural elements cut off from the process of their reproduction. As Godelier sees this: "It therefore seems clear to me that only if we radically reject vulgar materialism can we hope to tackle correctly the task of analyzing the relation between determination and dominance, and so to establish, so far as some societies are concerned, the working of the structural causality of their various modes of production in relation to their organization and evolution."[41]

Althusser has utilized the concept of "mode of production" in two ways. First, all structures are characterized by production, whether they be political, theoretical, ideological or material. Thus, research in these areas would methodologically parallel one another but, according to Althusser, have no unique unity and constitute discontinuous sciences. Second, *Capital*

Barthes *Mythologies* (New York, 1972) and *Système de la Mode* (Paris, 1967). These works are diverse and naturally our schematic criticism would have to be modified in each case, but Sebag speaks for all when he says, "It is the analysis of ideologies which, from our point of view, seems to us to have the most importance: structuralism, in effect, found the best illuminations in studying the different symbolic systems that engender all culture: but more, the philosophic legitimization of political action returns always, in the last instance, to a self-questioning of the validity of the models which guide this action." *Marxisme et Structuralisme*, p. 14.

40. Cf. J.-P. Palmier, *Lacan* (Paris, 1970), especially the appendix "Lacan and Lévi-Strauss." Lacan is another figure whose influence was felt through the *Sixième Section* and its students. His seminars given there have recently been published. Cf. *Les Quatre Concepts Fondamentaux de la Psychanalyse* (Paris, 1973), which includes an introduction indicating his indebtedness to Braudel and Lévi-Strauss.

41. Godelier, *op.cit.*, p. x.

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must be read both at the level of material production, through the creation of the concept of mode of production and therefore a science, historical materialism, and at the level of theoretical production in the form of a Theory of theories or philosophy of science called dialectical materialism. In this way *Capital* is both the inauguration of a particular science and the foundation for the sciences. If the various productions are unified, then, *not* ontologically (such as the attempt to use the concept of "matter"), but by the homologous form of "structure of production," how does that stand against Althusser's insistence that "theory is a specific practice which acts on its own object and ends in its own *product*: a *knowledge*"?[42] He does this through the specter of a Theory above theories, "The knowledge of the process of this theoretical practice in its generality, that is, as the specified form or real difference of the practice, itself a specified form of the general process of transformation, of the 'development of things,' constitutes a first theoretical elaboration of Theory, that is, of the materialist dialectic."[43] The problem is that Althusser wants *both* specificity of each science, as the production of its *own* concepts, and the right to utilize Marxism as the "Theory of theoretical practice"; a "right" which turns out to be from privilege rather than justification. As Glucksmann so accurately states it, "even if it were possible to grasp the scientificity of Marxism in opposition to classical political economy be defining the 'object of *Capital*,' it would still remain to be shown that this established more than the epistemology of one particular science, or that by starting from the scientificity of *Capital* it is possible to reach towards the essence of 'theoretical practice in general' and 'through it' to the essence of 'the development of things in general'."[44]

We raise these points only because they are one symptom of a recurring problematic in Althusser's "systematic" approach to Marx, but a "symptom" which may be at the root of structuralism's peculiar theoretical limitations. We can try to define this theme by beginning with Althusser's most basic criticism, that of the ideological couple, empiricism-historicism. Empiricism is, for Althusser, any number of variant ways in which theories fail to rigorously distinguish between the conceptual object of knowledge and the real, material object. This must be maintained both with regard to recognizing that all knowledge is conceptual (the concrete in thought is the synthesis of many determinations) and that there is a disjunction between appearance and reality such that the immediacy of empirical phenomena is ideologically determined. In this sense, Althusser is in agreement with Levi-Strauss that social relations are *not* "visible" and do in fact "contradict" in

42. Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York, 1970), p. 173.
43. *Ibid.*
44. A. Glucksmann, "Un Structuralisme Ventriloque," *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 250 (March, 1967), p. 1567. Even though this essay was published almost immediately after the first edition of *Lire le Capital* it remains the most penetrating critique of Althusser yet produced. There is a slightly edited English translation in *New Left Review*, no. 72 (March-April, 1972), pp. 38-45.

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reality their particular forms of manifestation as produced by the social structure (*Erscheinungsform* in Marx). Thus the empiricist deviation occurs whenever the concept and the real object are collapsed, even if it is anti-empiricist in the traditional sense of the term. Therefore, Althusser reads Marx's critique of Hegel as precisely another recognition of this broad epistemological problematic. "Hegel fell into the error therefore, of considering the real as the result of self-coordinating, self-absorbed, and spontaneously operating thought, while the method of advancing from the abstract to the concrete is but a way of thinking by which the concrete is grasped and is reproduced in our mind as a concrete. It is by no means, however, the process which itself generates the concrete."[45] But, once the conceptual order is identified with the material order of things, history is *given* this periodization or development which mistakes the process of knowledge for the process of history's production and reproduction. This other side of empiricism is what Althusser calls historicism and it means, as in *Annales* or Lévi-Strauss, the adoption of a linear temporality and eventism. As we have seen, the identification of the content of history with the most observable sequence of "events" simultaneously constitutes a simple history of cumulative, unidirectional time obliterating the differentiation of temporalities and "breaks." However, Althusser extends his critique of historicism into the problem of the production of concepts, what he calls the "knowledge effect." In those cases where the particular production reaches the stage of a "theoretical practice," as opposed to an "ideological practice," it is "freed" from historical conditions and therefore does not bear any relation to other practices—specifically economic or political. "Thus in mathematics it is tempting to think the knowledge effect of such and such an especially abstract formula as the extremely purified and formalized echo of such and such a *reality*, whether it is concrete space or the first concrete manipulations and operations of human practice... beneath the incontestable differences that have to be thought, a continuity of meaning which links in principle the *knowledge effect* of modern mathematical objects to an original meaning effect which is an integral part of an original real object, a concrete practice...an 'original ground' of the knowledge effect: either the real object itself from which, according to empiricism, knowledge only ever extracts one part, the essence: or the Husserlian 'pre-reflexive' life-world, the passive ante-predicative synthesis."[46] This attack on "historicism" is thus merely an extension of the

45. Marx, *op.cit.*, p. 45.

46. Althusser, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York, 1970), p. 62. This English translation is from the second edition of *Lire le Capital* (Paris, 1968) which eliminates three essays from the original edition: by Establet, Macherey and Ranciere. The Ranciere piece is important since Glucksmann uses it extensively in his critical essay. Geras suggests in his article (cited below) that Althusser edited the volume as a silent response to Glucksmann's devastating critique. The answer is more interesting and revealing; Ranciere came into violent opposition with Althusser over the latter's attitudes during the May events and disavowed any

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argument that the real object and the process of thought must be kept wholly distinct, with the precision that the "knowledge effect" (conceptual production) and the "society effect" (material production) bear no internal relation and cannot be said to condition or bear on each other. Not only does it become impossible to articulate the relation between conceptual and non-conceptual order, but "science" rises up and out of the entire social structure. "Science can no more be ranged within the category of the 'superstructure' than language... As for science, it may well arise from ideology, detach itself from its field in order to constitute itself as a science, but precisely this detachment, this 'break' inaugurates a new form of historical existence and temporality which altogether saves science (at least in certain historical conditions that ensure the real continuity of its own object—conditions that have not always existed) from the common fate of a single history: that of the 'historical bloc' unifying structure and superstructure."[47] The parenthetical remark is indeed enlightening. Of course, the historical conditions that "ensure" its real continuity have not always existed, for the very good reason that they are ideal. There is no reason to leap from the valid observation that segments of the social formation have their own "tempo" and distinct mode of determination, which would avoid reductionism and economism, to the extreme end of ensuring their full and absolute autonomy. History, as a specific object of knowledge, gives us no reason to expect that such conditions of "continuity" would ever come about, nor, more importantly, is there any reason, aside from ideological ones, to argue for the necessity of such a degree of self-movement. There has already been considerable recognition, even among those friendly to Althusser's thought, that this account of science and "theoretical practice" is impossible to maintain.[48] However, it is completely uncritical to take the view, for example in Geras, that it is only a momentary lack of precision or weakness which can be eclectically separated from the rest of the theory. Not only does this problem lie at the foundations of Althusser's approach but also in its "kinship" with the theoretical approaches we have been discussing. It is a deeper manifestation of the structuralist "problematic" and can be articulated in Althusser's own language.

A "society effect" is studied by historical materialism and is the mechanism by which a material mode of production creates a certain *society* (rather than something else) from pre-existing materials. A

contribution to the second edition. At any rate, Glucksmann bases his criticisms on the articles of Althusser and Balibar which were unchanged in either edition.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

48. Norman Geras, "Althusser's Marxism: An Assessment and Account," *New Left Review*, no. 71 (January-February, 1972), pp. 57-96. This is a very weak assessment since it concerns the minor point of whether Althusser should or should not define "science" as within the "social formation." But Geras never takes this surface problem to its depth and root in Althusser's thought which would require a more critical approach to terminology and concepts which Geras simply summarizes from the texts.

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"knowledge effect" is the object of dialectical materialism and is the mechanism by which theoretical production creates knowledge out of pre-existing ideologies. This is a crucial point of Althusser's presentation since, after having created a gulf between the process of thought and the order of reality (so as to avoid empiricist deviations), he now must clarify the relation of the conceptual order to what is non-conceptual, or the "society effect" could never be *known* as a "knowledge effect." But a solution evades Althusser precisely because of the abstract and extreme manner in which he has posed it. A critical and materialist approach would obviously make a philosophy of science (or a Theory of theories) a product and condition of determinate scientific theory. But Althusser has already arbitrarily separated these levels of reflection under the false dichotomy of historical materialism and dialectical materialism. It thus becomes an insoluble problem of priority. That is, in order to have a science we must *know* the mechanism of the "knowledge effect," which is what separates a science from ideology; but the mechanism of the "knowledge effect" already presupposes the existence of a science upon which it reflects theoretically. Althusser either inverts the priority of this circle depending on the context, or evades the question by claiming that a Theory of theoretical production in general (philosophy of any possible science) is simultaneously present in one specific science, historical materialism. The claim, however, is inconsistent with his own position that sciences are discontinuous modes of knowledge having no single unity.

The most obvious answer, namely, that the "society effect" produces the "knowledge effect," would relate science to specific and determinate historical conditions (which does not necessarily mean a reductionist relation). But Althusser rejects any such mediation under the title of "historicism," i.e., it makes the knowledge of capitalism depend on the historical existence of the capitalist mode of production. This extreme critique of "historicism" is a fundamental error of Althusser's theory and leads directly to a formalistic theory of the "combinational" in which a science of history bears no relation to its present, existent social and historical conditions. Thus he argues, as in this context, that a theory of science must *precede*, in the form of the *theoretical possibility* of its object,[49] the knowledge of its object as a real, external, non-conceptual object—what he calls the "society effect" in historical materialism. Thus, to the extent that this theory of knowledge can establish no relation to social and historical conditions, its idealist problematic is fully revealed. By trying to refute categories of empiricism and historicism that are abstractly drawn,

49. "[T]he knowledge of a real object is not reached by immediate contact with the 'concrete' but by the production of the *concept* of that object (in the sense of object of knowledge) *as the absolute condition of its theoretical possibility.*" *Reading Capital*, p. 184 (emphasis added).

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Althusser's attempts at a materialist epistemology become unintelligible. Taking this important passage, in which Althusser tries to go from theoretical production to the real object, his lack of any historical or practical mediation closes the question within "contemplative" conceptions. "[T]he process of production of a knowledge necessarily proceeds by the constant transformation of its (conceptual) object; . . . it is precisely the effect of this transformation, which is the same thing as the history of knowledge, that . . . produces a *new* knowledge (a new object of knowledge) *which still concerns the real object*, knowledge of which is deepened precisely by this reorganization of the object of knowledge. As Marx says profoundly, the *real* object, of which knowledge is to be acquired and deepened, *remains what it is*, after as before the process of knowledge which involves it (cf. the 1857 *Introduction*); if, therefore, *it is the absolute reference point* [emphasis added] for the process of knowledge which is concerned with it—the deepening of the knowledge of the real object is achieved by *a labor of theoretical transformation*." [50]

We can now outline the basic criticism of Althusser's theory of knowledge. The real object "remains what it is" when knowledge is acquired only if we restrict the acquisition of knowledge to contemplative knowledge of concepts. If knowledge includes historically determinate praxis and action, the claim contradicts the whole force of Marx's revolution in bourgeois philosophy. In addition, the question remains as to how the structure of reality can be the "absolute reference" for theory without, at the same time, being the *object* of knowledge? Or, how can theory "concern the real object" if, as a science, this object, as simple externality, cannot be related to its conceptual coherence? What finally could Althusser mean by saying that a theory "refers" to reality if he allows no mediation between concepts and their non-conceptual foundations?

Therefore, it becomes less surprising that Althusser flirts with a Kantian transcendental "root" between concepts and reality, or that he must treat concepts as positive, abstracting them from their process of formation. When we turn to history, not only does this produce a pre-Marxist conception but also a purely idealist understanding of the relation between concepts (modes of knowledge) and their historical existence. Balibar, making what is implicit in Althusser explicit, simply argues that theoretical knowledge is knowledge of the *possibility* of the object of knowledge. "By varying the combination of these elements according to the two connexions which are part of the structure of every mode of production, we can therefore reconstitute the various modes of production, i.e., we can set out the 'presuppositions' for the theoretical knowledge of them, which are *quite simply the concepts of the conditions of their historical existence*" (emphasis added). As Glucksmann was one of the first to point out, Balibar

50. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

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is asserting, slipped in with the words "quite simply," a transcendental epistemology.[51] There is, of course, nothing new about such a position and how it solves the problem of the relation between the categories of thought and reality. "All synthesis, therefore," Kant wrote, "even that which renders perception possible, is subject to the categories: and since experience is knowledge by means of connected perceptions, the categories are conditions of the possibility of experience, and are therefore valid *a priori* for all objects of experience."[52] Consequently, in continuity with Lévi-Strauss' position, the relation between the "representation" of the object to the real non-conceptual object is always transcendental, but not centered in consciousness. The relation between the "categories" of thought and the "elements" of reality is transcendent precisely because, as Althusser continually emphasizes, it is not an empirical relation of thought to its object—nor can experience ever provide its status as a conceptual object. Though Lévi-Strauss admits this dimension of structuralism quite readily, what Ricoeur has called "a Kantian rather than a Freudian unconscious," Althusser simply evades and obscures the whole question. But what else does the formulation of the double role of production (material and theoretical) serve but to co-relate (not empirically but structurally) the categories of theoretical knowledge to the elements of real, material production and the real object? Production, the central concept of structuralism, determines the order of knowledge *and* the order of reality.

Godelier defines his approach within Lévi-Strauss' ethnographic research where there are "two principles of structural analysis: the first, that a structure is part of reality but not of visible relations, the second, that the study of the internal functioning of a structure must precede and clarify the study of its genesis and its evolution."[53] Godelier sees in ethnography the proof that the dominance of kinship relations is not accounted for by reductionism or economism. "In kinship relations, whatever form they may take, there is an *element* that can never be reduced to a mere economic relation or deduced exclusively from such a relation."[54] Thus a mode of production, meaning not merely subsistence activities but the whole complex process of reproduction occuring in the superstructure, is the combination of two irreducible structures: relations and forces of production. Of course the reference here is not solely to economic activity because the factors constituting the two irreducible structures always have some specific, definite historical content. Thus relations of production, though always constituting forms of labor, non-labor and property, can be mediated through political, religious, kinship or class structures. Also, for

51. Glucksmann, *op.cit.*, p. 1569.
52. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York, 1965), p. 171.
53. M. Godelier, "Système, Structure et Contradiction dans *Le Capital*," *Les Temps Modernes*, no. 246 (November, 1966), p. 837.
54. *Rationality and Irrationality in Economy*, *op.cit.*, p. ix.

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Godelier the problem of time becomes differential and structural both in that continuous, homogeneous history does not exist and genesis or transition, being itself structured, can only be known after the complete knowledge of the structure's synchrony. Godelier, however, tries to resolve this complex of problems by using the *present* as "conjuncture" for the base of each structural analysis. It is an approach suggested by Althusser: "On the contrary, we must regard these differences in temporal structure as *and only as* so many objective indices of the mode of articulation of the different elements or structures of the whole...it is only in the specific unity of the complex structure of the whole that we can think the concept of their so-called backwardness, forwardness, survivals and unevenness of development, which co-exist in the structure of the real historical present: the present of *conjuncture*."[55]

Godelier proceeds with a distinction between contradiction in the reproduction of social relations and a transitional contradiction, that is, the contradiction entailing a change in social relations. Yet, the contradiction in the social relations, *contributes* to their reproduction: it is the "mechanism" that *maintains* the social structure. Without it society would cease to function as it would cease, in whatever specific historical form, to be able to appropriate labor. This invariant contradiction then is not only not related to the question of transition and change but its continued existence neither weakens nor is incompatible with the social structure. For example, if we maintain that capitalism is characterized by the appropriation of surplus-labor through the private ownership of the means of production, then capitalism requires, in the very process of reproducing itself, the labor-capital contradiction. By recognizing its existence one cannot infer that the social relations will change, nor specify the moment of that change, since this contradiction does not mark capitalism's death, it marks its whole existence. "It develops itself with the development of the system, it transforms itself with the evolution of capitalism from free competition to monopolies and the syndicalist and political organization of the working class. The contradiction is antagonistic: the function of a class is to exploit the other. It manifests itself through the class struggle."[56] If this contradiction does not give us the "secret" of historical change and transition, it must be distinguished from a contradiction which *is* incompatible and variant, occuring in the maturation of the system, and characterized by the fact that the contradiction becomes intra-structural; not merely within the relations of production but between the relations and forces of production.

In other words, Godelier distinguishes between a contradiction which is original to the mode of production and one that develops. He uses as his

55. *Reading Capital*, p. 106.
56. Godelier, "Système, Structure..." *op.cit.*, p. 847.

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example the feudal-bourgeois transition. The capital-labor contradiction is present immediately with capitalist exploitation. However, at its origins, capitalist relations of production *do not* contradict the development of the productive forces. That is precisely why it can replace feudalism which has developed this infra-structural incompatibility: between its specific relations of production and the realization of the potential in the forces of production. "Therefore, at least from its beginnings, there was no contradiction between capitalism and the development of the productive forces. There was a correspondence, a functional compatibility, fundamental to the dynamic of technological progress and of the capitalist class. But this same structural correspondence between capitalism and the productive forces signifies a non-correspondence of these productive forces and the feudal relations of production. And this non-correspondence founds, for Marx, the objective contradiction between feudal and capitalist relations, between the nobility and the capitalist class."[57] Thus, since each mode of production contains an invariant contradiction, at least in pre-history, they must all ultimately reach a point of incompatibility or non-correspondence with the further development of the productive forces. "These limits are, therefore, the objective properties of the system and these properties found the necessity of its evolution and its disappearance. They act, therefore, on themselves, they are the causality of the structure over itself."[58]

However much Godelier's remarks may penetrate the implicit connection between economism and a theory of capitalism's automatic collapse based solely upon the empirical recognition of a capital-labor contradiction, there is a profound limitation. It is questionable, first, whether Godelier's presentation of such a "factor" theory of history is viable for more than the limited area of feudal-bourgeois transition. Even in that situation it is highly schematic. But more importantly, Godelier only solves the problem of change and transition by investing the category of "forces of production" with its own teleological expansion, going in and out of phase with various relations of production. Not only does that assumption contain a false technological determinacy and unilinear "progress" in history, it is wholly incompatible with his own previous criticisms. How can one view the "forces of production" as an autonomous factor, having their own development, wholly independent of the specific relation of production, without falling into the ideologically dubious history of continuous expansion and rising productivity? Of course, the factors of relations and forces of production are not identical or reducible, but the fact is that "forces of production" only *develop*, given certain historical relations of production, from which they are inseparable. Precisely because of this, the

57. *Ibid.*, p. 849.
58. *Ibid.*

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forces of production are always "distorted" and constrained by their determination so that their development could never be a uni-directional expansion.

Thus Godelier unconsciously revives problems that we have seen very early in structuralist thought, on the one hand by investing a false teleology and autonomy to structures; and on the other, by the inability of the concept of "conjuncture" to account for political activity through other than external and mechanical determinations. The "return of the problematic" is even more striking in Balibar who quite confidently separates Althusser and himself from the whole structuralist approach and shrouds his analysis in a terminology concealing the predictability of its outcome. Balibar, proceeding like Godelier, isolates three elements whose combination defines all modes of production. 1) The laborer or direct producer (labor-force); 2) the means of production; 3) the non-laborer appropriating surplus-labor. These three elements are combined through the two following relations—which operate like transformation rules: 1) the relations of real or material appropriation; 2) the property relations (exploitive process). In all cases the content is according to the mode of production which combines them. Thus laborer can be "collective" or "individual" and, to avoid confusion, there is no immediate relation between these *concepts* and real factors of production—these are not "atoms" of history since they are not empirically descriptive modes of production. The point of a science of history is not description but conceptual representation. "By varying the combination of these elements according to the two connexions which are part of the structure of every mode of production, we can therefore reconstitute the various modes of production, i.e., we can set out the 'presuppositions' for the theoretical knowledge of them, quite simply, the concepts of the condition of their historical existence."[59]

Balibar hopes to show how this "general theory of combination" is the realization of Althusser's distinction of the structure in dominance and determination in the last instance by the economy. At any moment, in a structure in which each level is specific and irreducible, one structure can displace another in dominance, and the rule is that this dominance is never occupied by the economy alone. The explanation is that the structure in dominance is determined by an *absent* cause, the *invariant* economic structure and its functions. Balibar wants to demonstrate this again in the feudal-bourgeois transition. Following Marx, Balibar notes that the reproduction of the feudal relations are ultimately *extra-economic*—namely surplus-labor is realized not internally to the labor process but through simple *force*, in relations of *lordship and servitude*. But, he continues, as Marx also suggests, the reason behind the extra-economic force is itself

59. *Reading Capital*, p. 216.

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economic. For, Marx writes, "this much, however, is clear, that the Middle Ages could not live on Catholicism nor the ancient world on politics. On the contrary, it is the economic conditions of the times that explains why here politics and there Catholicism played the chief part."[60] There is, however, a difference between this quotation and Balibar's intention, since Marx does not mean by "economic conditions" any invariant elements. The *isolation* of the "economic" is the penultimate achievement of capitalism, and one of its weapons of mystification, when seen as the "natural laws" of the market. To project this back into pre-capitalist societies may help to explain capitalism but not a *universal* theory of modes of production. Balibar notes that in capitalism the surplus-value flows to the ruling class without extra-economic force, automatically in the very labor process. He concludes that in capitalism there is a coincidence between labor and surplus-value, whereas in feudalism they are "distinct in time and space." Hence this *disjunction* "is always an intrinsic feature of this mode of production (of the *economic instance*) and an effect of the form of combination peculiar to it (the property relation appears in it in the dual form of 'possession' and 'property')."[61]

But, as is readily apparent, these invariant terms are falsifying Marx's analysis. First, the coincidence between labor and surplus-value in capitalism does not lead to denying extra-economic force, it only provides a denser mystification of that force—it resorts to force, inscribed throughout the history of struggles for liberation in industrial society, under a complex ideological apparatus made possible precisely because the surplus-labor is "hidden." Marx's point was simply that feudalism does away with this particular form of ideology because, on the one hand, it appropriates the serf's labor-time directly and, on the other, it justifies the appropriation through a caste system which, of course, does not necessitate that the appropriation be concealed. If the serf is not "separated" from the means of production, as Balibar notes, he does not control them, at any rate, since their organization, maintenance, protection and distribution are in the hands of the nobility. In *fact* he is separated—except that it is in a distinct and different fashion from capitalism.

Balibar has not explained the difference between feudalism and capitalism, or any other mode of production. He has only shown what is original in capitalism by reading it back into the pre-capitalist formations. He has demonstrated the difference by demonstrating that the categories do not apply. How, then, can he claim that this is a theory of modes of production in general? Very similarly, as in Godelier, he merely assumes that the concepts given in *Capital* must apply to every mode of production, or Marx would be a historicist. The "assumption" leads to the following

60. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 81 n.
61. *Reading Capital*, p. 223.

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problem. By saying that this combinational concerns modes of production in general, we say that its concepts (terms) must be present in any and every mode of production—possible or real. But we only discover that the terms or concepts are meaningful (have a specific nature) within a given mode of production. To learn this we had to use the terms, and, by using them, we discovered they had *meaning* in the very mode of production they define. This circularity is demonstrated in Balibar's use of "property" as one element or universal concept. He distinguishes it from its legal definition, since that would bind it to a specific mode. But, then, what is it? Property is whatever the given society defines it to be—and one learns that by knowing the entire social structure. As Marx says, "to define bourgeois property is nothing else than to give an exposition of all social relations of bourgeois production."[62] Property, in any other sense than its legal meaning, would simply be the place of proprietors in the process of production. Then why is it a universal concept, if, apart from a specific mode of production or its legal definition, it is nothing? How does one go from extracting these concepts from their concrete demonstration in the entire structure of capital to their universality, which would imply that they could precede the emergence of capital? In other words, the "comparative table," as Balibar calls it, cannot be prior to the full analysis of a social structure, since it is derived from such an analysis. Thus this method presupposes the very historical analysis it is made to account for. Its concepts are not universal but bound to the modes of production studied. It is not the comparative analysis that produces these concepts, but the knowledge of a complete social structure which makes the comparative analysis possible. As Glucksmann concludes, Balibar and Althusser display, in fact, a *conceptual empiricism*—by raising to the power of universals each concept found in *Capital*. "It is not demonstrated that the object of *Capital* is the mode of production in general and not the mode of capitalist production alone. The presence in *Capital* of a universal theory of 'fundamental united forms of historical existence' remains a gratuitous hypothesis within a classic problem of Marxism. It is also not demonstrated that the method of *Capital* implies a comparative analysis in the structuralist style. All the terms which attempt to articulate this analysis proceed in fact from the 'synchronic analysis' of the process of capital which preserves the social relations and produces the terms. This 'synchronic analysis' supposes the comprehension not of a diversity (of modes of production) but a *development* (of the capitalist mode of production in *Capital*)."[63]

62. Marx, *Poverty of Philosophy* (New York, 1971), p. 154.

63. Glucksmann, *op.cit.*, p. 1583. Balibar has recently written a self-criticism concerning his contribution to *Reading Capital* which is surprisingly similar to the points made above. "In such a perspective, the very designation of 'instances' in the social formation can only lead to the designation of further *elements, invariant essences* of historical analysis...pre-existing the process of their historical transformation... That means...that the term 'economic' will have

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The recurring problematic in each of these thinkers is constituted by two concepts that are at the center of the structuralist critique of the human sciences: historicism and the centrality of consciousness (or, more specifically, *prise de conscience*). First, as we have seen, the original critique of eventism and empiricism that initiated structuralist methods is converted, through a structuralist reading of Marx, into a critique of historicism. This concept is notoriously vague and, though it functions partly polemically in Althusser, it means, at least, that there is an illicit identity between history as a concept of knowledge and history as a real object, in such a way that *praxis* or "human relations" stand simultaneously for the non-conceptual as well as the conceptual reality. It is correct, of course, that any fully anti-empiricist position begins with a critique of the tendency to identify the concept with the real object (so as to reify it in a state of non-mediation). Also there is a form of this confusion in certain historical relativisms which are unable to articulate the connection between history and the knowledge of history. But Althusser's critique throws out history with historicism so as to constitute a conceptual positivism, unfounded and preformative. Unless one is building a philosophic system in the form of a First Philosophy, concepts simply *are* historical. Not in the trivial sense of dated in time and space, but in the deeper sense of historical determination on the production and formation of concepts, the historicity of knowing activity. Thus Althusser's epistemological idealism rests precisely on carefully separating out the activity in Marx's critical epistemology, thereby leading from the critique of historicism to its other side, the denial of *prise de conscience.*

The problems that lay in the original shift to "deep structure" in history all lead to the "disappearance" of a history accessible to human consciousness as an act of intervention. Marx was able to have the best of historicism, avoiding its relativism by historicizing the subject in the specific sense that historical activity (its universality and level of determination) is directly proportional to the historical development of the productive forces and their social relations. Implicit throughout was the assumption that at some historical moment there would be an immediacy of adequation between consciousness and the surrounding historical conditions. The whole structuralist tradition puts this assumption in question both by recognizing a functional unconscious and grasping the self-movement of historical formations as not only irrespective of the level of consciousness but *always*, because of the time differential, beyond the grasp of a situated consciousness. At one level, it is of utmost importance to retain the positive

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the *same meaning* in the feudal or capitalist mode of production, and in fact in any mode of production whatsoever. Briefly, it is the risk of a return to the ideological presuppositions of political economy and bourgeois historiography. Without doubt my article was led to this tendency by the effort to eliminate all 'historicist' interpretations of Marx's critique." E. Balibar, "Sur la dialectique historique," *La Pensée*, no. 170 (July-August, 1973), p. 36.

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deepening of the concept of time. Indeed, the contribution of the differentiation of temporality and the horizontal character of time in history will once and for all abolish the nonsense of linear causal relations between political activity and material conditions or "hydraulic" theories on the raising of political consciousness. Any further cultural-ideological studies which fail to grasp the non-linear and non-simultaneous time can be of little value. But beyond this, the question returns to some "direction" to all these complex series, cycles and interplays of temporal structures, at least as to the impetus to man's critical rational faculties in the face of a "programmed" history. The answers which we have been discussing all involve a displacement of this onto pre-established "teleologies": the "long-term" structures of Braudel, the self-expanding forces of production in Godelier, even the organic structure of the mind in Lévi-Strauss. But is this leap into "autonomy" a solution or, merely, the mirror image of what it wants to escape? The ideological aspect of these solutions also plays a role here in that structuralism endemically suffers from techno-bureaucratic visions. [64]

The point finally is that we can accept the two strong points from this development, the existence of the unconscious and, correspondingly, the complex mediational process (cultural and superstructural) between consciousness and practical activity, without thereby abandoning an activist moment in critical theory. Certainly consciousness, in the sense it would be given, is not transparent, and its collective, semiotic and even mythological operations are the path by which we grasp its specific and constrained function in social history. But it is as though a little bit of this knowledge makes us flee from the possibility of directed historical activity, while a lot of it will precisely set the conditions for raising the question again.

Foucault is correct when he says in criticism, "Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous and making human consciousness the original subject of all historical development and all action are two sides of the same system of thought." But that view of consciousness, still held by Sartre in the *Critique*, has ceased *both* theoretically and practically to function in present historical struggles. It died not only with Marx's statement, "the traditions of all dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brain of the living," but when Freud grasped the "return of the repressed." What must be retained now, as Labrousse has said, is that "history, the science of movement, is also the consciousness of movement

64. It takes on a no less frightening face with Althusser's homage to authority and domination through the "eternalization" of ideology. "It is clear that ideology (as a system of mass representations) is indispensable in any society if men are to be formed, transformed and equipped to respond to the demands of their conditions of existence...men must ceaselessly be transformed so as to adapt them to these conditions: if this adaptation cannot be left to spontaneity but must be constantly assumed, dominated and controlled, it is in ideology that this demand is expressed... It is in ideology that the classless society...transforms men's 'consciousness'." *For Marx*, p. 235.

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and that is its essential originality... In its interpretation, has not Marxism forced the side of change, while structuralism—the side of resistance? A certain clarification of the first by the second can be an enrichment, notably since structuralism puts the accent on mental structure, the seat of resistance."[65] It does not close the question of consciousness but leaves it open, in such a way to suggest that certain theoretical "tools" can begin to intervene in understanding the present sclerosis of political action. There is no better concluding remark than from a work which, while bearing striking similarity to the social histories we have been discussion, belies the quiet charm of history long past by grasping a moment when human activity, violently and irrationally, "intervened" in the "vast expanse of slow-moving history."

In *From Caligari to Hitler* Kracauer weighs the impact of collective mentality. "Effects may at time turn into spontaneous causes. Notwithstanding their derivative character, psychological tendencies often assume independent life, and, instead of automatically changing with everchanging circumstances, become themselves essential springs of historical evolution. ...They cannot be inferred from current external factors but, conversely, help determine reactions to such factors. We are all human beings, if sometimes in different ways. These collective dispositions gain momentum in cases of extreme political change. The dissolution of political systems results in the decomposition of psychological systems, and in the ensuing turmoil traditional inner attitudes, now relaxed, are bound to become conspicuous, whether they are challenged or endorsed."[66]

65. E. Labrousse, "Structure et Mouvement en Histoire," *Raison Presente*, no. 7 (July-September, 1968), p. 47.

66. S. Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of German Film* (New Jersey, 1971), p. 9.

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*Social Capital**

by Mario Tronti

At the beginning of the third section of Book II of *Capital*, Marx distinguishes between the direct process of the production of capital and the total process of its reproduction. The former includes both the work process as well as the value-creating process. As we shall see, the latter includes both the process of consumption mediated by circulation, as well as the process of reproduction of capital itself. In the different forms assumed by capital within its cycle, and even more in the different forms assumed by this cycle, the movement of individual capital turns out to be a *part* of the total movement of social capital. "Every individual capital forms, however, but an individualized fraction, a fraction endowed with individual life, as it were, of the aggregate social capital, just as every individual capitalist is but an individual element of the capitalist class."[1] Marx says that, if we consider the annual function of social capital according to its result, i.e., if we consider the annual commodity-product furnished by society, we see that it includes both the *social* reproduction of capital as well as its *productive* and *individual* consumption. "It comprises also the reproduction (i.e., maintenance) of the capitalist class and the working class, and thus the reproduction of the capitalist character of the entire process of production:"[2] i.e., simple reproduction on an invariant scale which immediately appears a *part* of a more complex reproduction on a broader scale. Thus, it becomes a particular moment and a real factor of the accumulation of capital—accumulation no longer of individual capital, but of social capital; broadened reproduction within it of the capitalist class on the one hand, and of the working class on the other. Capital's process of socialization is the specific material base upon which is founded, on a certain level, the process of development of capitalism. The determinate formation of a capitalist *society* presupposes the production of *social* capital as an already accomplished *historical* act, which is already acknowledged as a *natural* fact. The figure of the collective capitalist, as a functionary of total social capital, is itself the product of a determinate level of capitalist production. Against it, both as a presupposition and as a result, the total social labor as the class of organized workers—social labor-power as a class—acquires objective material existence. Capital's "plan" comes primarily about from the necessity of making the working class function *as*

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* This is a chapter of Tronti's *Operai e Capitale* (Turin, 1971), pp. 60-85. For an introduction to Tronti, see *Telos*, no. 14 (Winter, 1972), pp. 23-24.

1. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. II (Moscow, 1957), p. 351.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 392.

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such within social capital. The growing socialization of the capitalist relation of production does not bring with it the socialist society, but only growing power for the workers within the capitalist system.

Of the three forms expressing the cyclic process of capital the third form, the cycle of commodity-capital (C'....C'), is the only one in which value-capital appears already as a point of departure of its value-creation. In the cycle of monetary capital and in that of productive capital, the point of departure is always the original value-capital, yet to be transformed into value (*valorizzare*). The whole movement is only the movement of the anticipated value-capital. C' on the other hand, as a relation of capital, immediately implies both the cycle of value-capital as well as that of surplus-value—and of a surplus-value already in part spent as rent, and in part accumulated as capital. To depart from C' means to depart from the total commodity-product as commodity-capital. In it individual consumption and productive consumption enter as conditions of the cycle; and if the productive consumption comes about through every individual capitalist, individual consumption immediately presents itself only as a social act. The transformation that obtains within this cycle concerns the magnitude of the value of capital. Thus, it is not the result of a formal shifting of monetary capital in the circulation process, but of a material change of productive capital in the process of production. The cycle C'...C' presupposes, within its trajectory, other industrial capital. But we have seen that its point of departure is no longer only the originally anticipated value-capital, but the value-capital already transformed into value. Its movement, "From its inception thus reveals itself as the total movement of the industrial capital."[3] But not only as "a form of movement common to all individual industrial capitals, but simultaneously also as a form of movement of the sum of the individual capitals, consequently of the aggregate capital of the capitalist class."[4]

Now, industrial capital finds itself simultaneously in all the different stages of its cycle and goes successively through the different functional forms of all three cycles. In fact, the total process is the unity of the three cycles. The total cycle is the real unity of the three forms. *Precisely because of this,* the *total* cycle, for every single functional form of capital, presents itself as its *specific* cycle. "It is a necessary prerequisite of the aggregate process of production, especially for the social capital, that it is at the same time a process of reproduction and hence a circuit of each one of its elements."[5] A part of capital, as commodity-capital, always is transformed into money. Another as monetary-capital is transformed in productive capital and still another, as productive capital, is once again transformed in

3. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

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commodity-capital. "The continuous existence of all three forms is brought about by the circuit the aggregate capital describes...its forms are hence fluid and their simultaneous hero are brought about by their succession."[6] As value that transforms itself into value, capital can only be a continuous movement, a cyclic process that goes through different stages and assumes different forms of development. "The circuit-describing process of capital means constant interruption, the learning of one stage and the entering into the next, the discarding of one form and the assuming of another." Yet, the *continuity* is "the characteristic mark of capitalist production."[7] It is in individual capitals that "the continuity of the reproduction is at times more or less interrupted."[8] When social capital as value undergoes a *revolution of value*, individual capital is always in danger of going under if it does not adjust to the conditions of this change of value. "The more acute and frequent such revolutions in value become, the more does the automatic movement of the new independent value operate with the elemental force of a natural process, against the foresight and calculation of the individual capitalist."[9] In this case, the mechanism of the cycle comes to a stop, production is reduced, and the entire process of development is forced to a halt: "Every stagnation in succession carries disorder into co-existence."[10] Hence the necessity to find a nexus among the cycles of individual capitals, understood as partial movement of the process of reproduction of the total social capital. In fact "the continuity...of the aggregate process is achieved only in the unity of the three circuits."[11] Only "aggregate social capital always has this continuity."[12] Social capital undergoes precisely what is undergone in "a ramified factory system", where the process flows with the maximum regularity and uniformity, where the product is constantly in the various stages of its process of formation and constantly passes from one phase of production to another."[13]

Furthermore, if we take capital as individual capital, the natural form that is assumed by the commodity-product turns out to be altogether irrelevant to the analysis. We are now directly dealing with the process of production of value and with the value of its products. This mode of exposition, however, appears purely formal as soon as we come to consider the total social capital and its value-product. The movement whereby a part of the value of the products is again transformed into capital while another part goes into individual consumption both of the capitalist and of the working class "form a movement within the value of the product itself" as

6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

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soon as the result of total capital comes to be expressed in this value: "this movement is not only a replacement of value but also a replacement in material and is therefore as much bound up with the relative proportions of the value-components of the total social product or with their use-value, their material shape."[14] The value reproduced in the means of production must be *at least* equal to the constant part of the value of social capital. Thus, e.g., the part of the social work-day that produces means of production produces nothing more than new constant capital, i.e., it produces only a product meant to enter in productive consumption. While the part of the social work-day which produces means of consumption produces only new variable capital and new surplus-value. Better yet, it produces products in whose natural forms are realized the value of variable capital and surplus-value. *Each* of these two parts of the social work-day produces and reproduces (and therefore accumulates) constant capital, variable capital and surplus-value of *both* main sections together, that of the means of production and that of the means of consumption. The work-day, which in the production of individual capital appeared immediately cut into necessary labor and surplus-value, and only mystified in its realization in the form of wage, now appears, in the production of social capital, actually divided between a constant part and a variable part of capital: between production-reproduction of the one and production-reproduction of the other, in each of which is included both production and consumption, means of production and means of consumption, productive consumption and individual consumption. Now the social work-day functions directly within the process of production of social capital. Within this process of production it produces, reproduces, and accumulates new capital; it produces-reproduces and accumulates new labor-power. At this level the division between necessary labor and surplus-labor does not disappear at all: it is simply generalized, i.e., *socialized* in the total process of capitalist production. There is a social surplus-labor which is taken from the working class and which ends up by socializing the very existence of surplus-value. But social surplus-value is nothing more than the profit of social capital: it has nothing to do with the super-profits that the thefts of monopolies extract from all the pores of society. It is all a process which has, as its material base and at the same time as its final objective, a maximum degree of socialization of capitalist production, socialization of labor-power and, *therefore*, socialization of capital. "Speaking of the point of view of society, and therefore considering the aggregate product of society, which comprises both the reproduction of social capital and individual consumption, we must not lapse into the manner copied by Proudhon from bourgeois economy and look upon this matter as though a society with a

14. *Ibid.*, p. 394.

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capitalist mode of production, if reviewed *en bloc*, as a totality, would lose this its specific historical and economic character. No, on the contrary. We have, in that case, to deal with the aggregate capitalist. The aggregate capital appears as the capital stock of all individual capitalists combined."[15]

According to Marx, profit is nothing more than the surplus-value calculated in social capital. Actually, surplus-value and profit are the same thing —quantitatively identical from the masses' viewpoint. Profit is the mystified form in which surplus-value *appears*, in the same way that wage is the mystified form in which the value of labor-power *appears*. It is only in surplus-value that the relation between capital and surplus-value is made clear, "*capital* appears *as relation to itself.*"[16] What disappears here is the very organic difference between the constant and the variable part of captial: surplus-value confronts only aggregate and indistinct capital. And this process is already accomplished when the process of production and circulation of capital is accomplished, along with the production and realization of surplus-value: when broadened reproduction flows and, therefore, accumulation advances. Yet, there is a point *within* this process which allows the entire development to make a *leap*. And it is when the whole of capitalist production comes to produce a general rate of profit and, consequently, an *average profit*. The fundamental idea of the average profit is based on the principle that "the capital in each sphere of production must share *pro rata* to its magnitude in the total surplus-value squeezed out of the labourers by the total social capital; or, that every individual capital should be regarded merely as a part of the total social capital, and every capitalist as a shareholder in the total social enterprise."[17] At this point, the profit that the individual capitalist takes in, is different from the surplus-value that he extracts. At this point profit and surplus-value are actually different magnitudes. Only exceptionally or accidentally does the surplus-value actually produced within a particular sphere of production coincides with the profit contained in the sales price of the commodity.

Already in the simple transformation of surplus-value in profit, "the portion of the value of a commodity forming the profit" is distinguished "from the portion forming its cost-price". Thus "it is natural that the conception of value should elude the capitalist at this juncture... so that his profit appears to him as something outside the imminent value of the commodity."[18] This appearance receives confirmation, solidity and structure within the historical base which corresponds to the profit of average social capital when all capitals tend to realize, in the prices of the

15. *Ibid.*, p. 433.
16. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, edited by F. Engels (Moscow, 1962), p. 48.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 166.

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commodities that they produce, not the directly produced particular surplus-value, but the average social profit, i.e., they seek to realize the price of production. Price of production here means cost plus cost multiplied by the average rate of profit ($k + k_{p'}$). In fact, the price of production *contains* the average profit. Only accidentally or exceptionally, the average profit is determined by the labor not paid and absorbed in an individual sphere of production. Ordinarily, i.e., according to the law, it is determined by the total exploitation of labor, as carried out by total capital. "At a given degree of exploitation, the mark of surplus-value produced in a particular sphere of production is then more important for the aggregate average profit of social capital, and then for thus for the capitalist class in general, than for the individual capitalist in any specific branch of production. It is of importance to the latter only in so far as the quantity of surplus-value produced in this branch helps to regulate the average profit."[19] But capitalists and therefore the economists as well, says Marx, certainly do not generally realize the structure of this process, in the same way that they do not specifically realize that "in such crude and meaningful form...we can glimpse that the value of commodities is determined by the labor contained in them."[20]

To a given rate of exploitation of labor there corresponds a given level of capitalist development. Not vice-versa. It is not the intensity of capital that measures the exploitation of workers. On the contrary: it is the determinate historical form of surplus-value that uncovers the ultimate social determination of surplus-value. On the basis of social capital, average profit is no longer simply the phenomenal and mystified form of social surplus-value, it is no longer only the ideological expression whose function is to hide the exploitation of the working class behind the "labor of capital." The average profit of social capital is an historically well-determined category which follows immediately an advanced process of socialization of capitalist production and immediately preceedes a further process of development and of relative stabilization. It is from the very beginning naturally implicit in the system of capital, yet it intervenes historically not as a specific gradual passage point from one phase of capitalist development to the next but as truly abrupt *leap,* full of dangerous *contradictions* for the capitalist class and of miraculous *possibilities* for the labor movement. The history of the successive determinations of capital, i.e., the development of the historical contradictions of capitalism, can offer, in many points and at different levels, the *possibility* to break the cyclic process of production and reproduction of capitalist social relations. And it is not necessarily the case that those possibilities are directly connected to the periods of catastrophic

19. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 169.

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crisis in the system: they can be directly connected to a growing phase of *development* which creates a positive movement in the whole social texture of production without presupposing that the latter is owned and *organized* by the capitalist class—without being organically articulated within capitalist development. We must not believe in an absolute self-consciousness, in all the phases of capitalism and of its functionaries. Capital's self-consciousness is a late acquisition during its maturity.

Lenin wrote that "...the idea of seeking salvation for the working class in anything save the further development of capitalism is reactionary." [21] The working class suffers more for the shortcomings of capitalist development than capitalism itself. In fact, the bourgeois revolution offers the greatest advantages to the proletariat: in a way, it is "in the highest degree advantageous to the proletariat." [22] The bourgeois revolution continually reproduces itself within capitalist development. It is the permanent form expressing the growth of productive forces, the solidification of the technological levels, the class-tensions within the relations of production, the system's growing expansion over all of society, and the ensuing political struggle between capital's general interest and the capitalists' particular interests. The bourgeoisie's politically moderate soul is engaged, throughout the whole course of its history, to give a gradual peaceful form to the continual revolutionary upsets of its own economic mechanism." It is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie for the bourgeois revolution not to sweep away all the remnants of the past too resolutely, but keep some of them, i.e., for this revolution not to be fully consistent, not complete, and not to be determined and relentless. Social-Democrats often express this idea somewhat differently by stating that the bourgeoisie betrays its own self, that the bourgeoisie betrays the cause of liberty, that the bourgeoisie is incapable of being consistently democratic." [23] At different levels, the proletariat is called to collaborate in the development. At different levels it must choose the specific form of its political refusal.

There is a point in which it is still the development of capitalist production *in inself* which can precipitate the capitalist system into a crisis. Labor's answer can come so immediate as to provoke a high degree of class-struggle, and the coming into being of a revolutionary process that goes behind the system. Thus, the take-off of capitalist society can offer the historical occasion for a revolution with socialist content: if the labor movement finds itself politically better *organized* than the bourgeoisie. But it would be an error to generalize this movement. We are using it here only to reiterate that a revolutionary rupture of the capitalist system can occur at different levels of capitalist development. We cannot expect that the history

21. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. IX, (Moscow, 1972), p. 49.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
23. *Ibid.*

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of capitalism be *concluded*, in order to begin to organize the process of its dissolution.

The growing process of capitalist socialization brings itself to a point in which the production of capital must pose the task of constructing a specific type of social organization. When capitalist production has been generalized to cover all of society—all social production has become capitalist production—only then, on this basis, a truly *capitalist society* arises as a determinate historical fact. The social character of production has been extended to such a point that the entire society now functions as a *moment* of production. The sociality of capitalist production can now lead to a *particular form of socialization of capital*—the social organization of capitalist production. This is the arrival point of a long historical process. In the same way that capitalist production presupposes the generalization of simple mercantile production that only *capital*—as a specific fact—is able to historically realize, so the formation of a capitalist society presupposes the generalization of specifically capitalist production that only *social capital*—and the *Gesamtprozess* of its production—is historically able to realize. In other words, as Marx put it, it is the totality of the capitalists, against the individual capitalist, i.e., the totality of the capitalists of any particular sphere of production. Here social capital is not just the total capital of society: it is not the simple sum of individual capitals. It is the whole process of socialization of capitalist production: it is capital itself that becomes uncovered, at a certain level of its development, as *social power*.

Even in terms of individual capital, capital is a social relation, and the individual capitalist is the personification of this relation: he is a function of his own capital, and the direct expression of his private property. But in terms of social capital, capital comes to represent all capitalists, and the individual capitalist is reduced to an individual personification of this totality: the direct functionary, no longer of his own capital, but of the capitalist class. At this point, the management of the individual enterprise can still remain in the hands of managers. Its property is the property of capital and it *appears* as an objective part of social wealth.

Actually, this social wealth now finds its private proprietor in the figure, itself historically determinate, of the *collective capitalist* which, on the one hand is the supreme mediation and composition of all particular bourgeois interests, while on the other it is the direct representative of the general social interest for capital. The collective capitalist is the form assumed by *power* in the hands of social capital—the power of capitalist society upon itself, capital's self-government, and therefore government of the capitalist class, capitalism's maximum result and probably the final form of its existence. We must not take seriously the bourgeois arguments concerning State intervention in the economy: at a certain level of development this apparent external intervention is nothing more than a very advanced form

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of self-regulation of the economic mechanism or, in certain cases, it serves to put back in motion that type of mechanism at a higher level. Capitalist planning itself can be a particular moment within the development of capital. The specific general trait remains the objective historical existence of social capital.

"Under capitalist production it is not merely a matter of obtaining an equal mass of value in another form—be it that of money or some other commodity—for a mass of values thrown into circulation in the form of a commodity, but it is rather a matter of realizing as much surplus-value, or profit, on capital advanced for production, as any other capital of the same magnitude, or *pro rata* to its magnitude in whichever line it is applied. It is, therefore, a matter, at least as a minimum of selling the commidities at prices which yield the average profit, i.e., of prices of production. In this form capital becomes conscious of itself as a *social power* in which every capitalist participates proportionally to his share in the total social capital."[24] The particular interest of the individual capitalist, or of capital in a determinate sphere of production, reduces, in these conditions, to the possibility of obtaining, in the direct exploitation of its own workers, a particular gain, a profit higher than the average. It practically reduces to the different figures of super-profit, to the various possible forms for extracting a supplementary surplus-value, to the different external movements inherent to the new "mechanism" of oligopolistic competition. Individual enterprises, or entire "privileged" productive activities, along with the propulsive function of the whole system, constantly tend to break from within the total social capital in order to subsequently re-compose it at a higher level. The struggle among capitalists continues, but now it functions directly within the development of capital. Given that "the average rate of profit depends on the intensity of exploitation of the sum total of labour by the sum total of capital", then "the individual capitalist, as well as the capitalists as a whole, take direct part in the exploitation of the total working-class by the totality of capital and in the degree of that exploitation, not only out of general class sympathy, but also for direct economic reasons."[25] Thus, all individual capitalists—all the particular spheres of capital—are directly interested in the productivity of social labor activated by collective capital. In fact, it is from this productivity that depend on the one hand, the mass of use-value in which average profit expresses itself, and on the other, the sum of value of total anticipated capital that determines the rate of profit. The development of labor's social productivity not accidently manifests itself in two ways: in the grown absolute magnitude of the already accumulated productive labor, and in the relative diminution of the part of living labor required for mass production.

24. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, *op.cit.*, p. 191.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

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The two processes are organically complementary: intensification of accumulation and concentration of capital.'...the mass of profit increases in spite of its slower rate with the growth of the invested capital. However, this requires a simultaneous concentration of capital...it also requires its centralization, i.e., the swallowing up of the small capitalist by the big and their deprivation of capital."[26] The concentration is *now* the specific form in which expropriation is expressed, i.e., the ulterior separation of working conditions from the producers. "The labour of a capitalist stands altogether in inverse proportion to the size of his capital, i.e., to the degree in which he is a capitalist."[27] But this division between the working conditions on the one hand, and the producers on the other is precisely what constitutes the historical notion of capital. At this level, the process of decapitalization does nothing more than confirm the development of capital.

Expropriation is now extended from the direct producers to the individual capitalists themselves. To expropriate the single individuals of their means of production is the point of departure of the mode of capitalist production. But it also becomes its end when the private means of production present themselves, and can only present themselves as means of production in the hands of associated producers. Thus, capitalist expropriation presents itself as appropriation of social property on the part of few individuals. "The capital, which in itself rests on a social mode of production and presupposes a social concentration of means of production and labour-power, is here directly endowed with the form of social capital (capital of directly associated individuals) as distinct from private capital, and its undertakings assume the form of social undertakings as distinct from private undertakings. It is the abolition of capital as private property within the framework of capitalist production itself."[28] The capitalist is transformed into a simple agent and administrator of someone else's capital. Thus, property appears as separated from its function and "...hence also labour is entirely divorced from ownership of means of production and surplus-value."[29] Hence, profit appears directly as the appropriation of someone else's surplus-value. "This result of the ultimate development of capitalist production is a necessary transitional phase towards the reconversion of capital into the property of producers, although no longer as the private property of the producers, but rather as the property of associated producers, as outright social property."[30] This is the form assumed by the annihilation of capitalist private industry in terms of the capitalist system: "This is the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist

26. *Ibid.*, p. 241.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 428.
30. *Ibid.*

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mode of production itself, and hence a self-dissolving contradiction... It is private production without the control of private property."[31] At this point, capital altogether ceases *to appear* as the property of direct producers, gives up many of its earlier mystified forms, divests itself of some of its more evident ideological clothes—true paleo-capitalist bourgeois left-overs. The very same process of socialization of labor becomes directly embodied, without mediations, in the total production of social capital. And capital appears as a social force of production directly in the form of private property of large capitalists. "Thus grows the power of capital, the alienation of the conditions of social production personified in the capitalists from the real producers. Capital comes more and more to the fore as a social power, whose agent is the capitalist. This social power no longer stands in any possible relation to that which the labour of a single individual can create."[32] Thus, capital raises itself to the level of a "general social power," while the capitalist is reduced to the level of a simple agent, functionary, or "emissary" of this power—no longer its own representative, but the direct commissar with limited power. The fetishism of capital has practically won.

Everyone knows that the modern bourgeois political group turns out to be increasingly of direct capitalist extraction and that, on this path, and not through the history of political thought, it is possible to catch the real transformations that have taken place in the structure of the State. The petty-bourgeois fear of the anonymous power of the technicians now reflects only the survival of backward sectors of capitalist development. For its part, big capital seeks only to give a *political* content to technocratic power. In fact, it is unlikely that the slow and just death of representative democracy marks a simultaneous extinction of the *political power* of the ruling class: actually it marks only a *reform* of the State, a modernization of its structures, an adjustment to its new specific functions which will increasingly have to respect the production schemes of whatever industrial machine. Clearly, power will become increasingly unified at the top, and only as such, will it be able to decentralize and be articulated at the base. As in every modern rational enterprise worth its salt, decisions must be assigned to all, but the *power* to decide must be left only to one. Thus, political power becomes unified and homogeneous at all levels, from the enterprise of the individual capitalist, to the State of the whole people. Only at this point does the *class dictatorship* of capital become truly *democratic*: it receives the sanction of popular sovereignty and immediately applies it within its own industrial apparatus. Because of its intrinsic contradictions, it will not be able to reach it, yet the final objective of capitalism always remains *capital's self-government,* democracy directed no longer by small

31. *Ibid.*, p. 429.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

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proprietors, but by large capitalists, with the sovereign population reduced to the level of labor-power and capital-as-a-fetish erected to a political State within its very society.

In order to be understood, a specifically capitalist society must be itself seen as an historical product of the development of capital. There is a level of the process of socialization of capital which materially explodes the need for a rational organization of society. The growing rationalization of the productive process must now be extended to the entire network of social relations. It is no longer sufficient for capitalist production as such to come to cover the entire territory of bourgeois society. It is its specific characteristics, the historically attained level of capital's production, its particular internal organization, which must now mark the general organization of society until it repeats on the level of capitalist society and evaluated to the maximum, the initial relation which pitted the individual capitalist on the one hand against the single worker on the other. The same relation *must* now reappear and obtain on the level of *social classes*. It is an objective requirement of capitalist production, on the level of social capital, to recuperate a real general terrain of the class-struggle. In fact, only through this recuperation can the class-struggle be consciously regulated and organized within the plan of capital. We have already seen how the labor struggle has always objectively functioned as a dynamic moment of capitalist development. Yet, it can be said that only on this level it can be rationally foreseen and utilized in the total process of production of social capital. Thus, the tension between capital and labor becomes a "legal institution of society," and all the institutions which *guarantee* an orderly bourgeois development of particular labor claims can be legally recognized in their full autonomy. The very organizations of workers acquire a decisive importance for the social interests of capital. There is a time in which modern capital cannot do without a modern union, in the factory, in society, and directly in the State. The political integration of the labor party within the absurd antedeluvian forms of bourgeois Parliament, becomes itself a secondary moment of mediation, in order to arrive at the true organic integration of labor unions within the programmed development of capitalist society. From here, again, follows the whole restructuring which invests the general form of power, in the search for a different difficult equilibrium between the growing requirement of a centralization of decisions and the need for an effective decentralization of the functions of collaboration and control: a tendential unity of authority and pluralism, of central direction and of local autonomy, with political dictatorship and an economic democracy, an *authoritarian State* and a *democratic society*. True, at this point there is no longer capitalist development without a capitalist plan. But there cannot be a plan of capital without *social capital*. It is the capitalist society which, by itself, programs its own development. And this is precisely *democratic planning*.

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Almost toward the end of the first volume of *Capital* Marx writes: "And as we pre-supposed the limits set by capitalist production, that is to say, pre-supposed the process of social production in a form developed by purely spontaneous growth, we neglected any more rational combination, directly any systematically practicable with the means of production, and the mass of labour-power at present disposable."[33] Clearly, today we can no longer carry out this same type of abstraction. Marx himself abandoned it when he went on to analyze the total process of capitalist production. Certainly, the limitations of this production must always be considered as given. Today, it is not a matter of rediscovering, after decades of absolute faith in the process of deterioration of capitalism, a similarly absolute faith in the objective rationality of this system. That all is well is certainly not what the modern capitalist believes, even with his science. It is believed, however, by our neo-reformist ideologists, always with their soul in crisis: pure economists, applied sociologists, technicians of the labor movement and Marxist philosophers—all these who are against the system, but who do not know what to do in order to fight it. In fact, in all of their recollections of capitalism, they regularly forget the working class.

"...The entire capitalist mode of production is only a relative one, whose barriers are not absolute. They are absolute only for this mode, i.e., on its basis."[34] "Capitalist production seeks continually to overcome these immanent barriers, but overcomes them only by means which again place these barriers in its way and on a more formidable scale."[35] Everyone knows that historically capitalism appears, from the very beginning, as a system of contradictions: its internal development is the development of its contradictions. And even when the process of social production no longer takes on a natural and spontaneous garb, but rather, takes the opposite, a rational and planned form, even then the articulate system of production, from the single factory to the height of the State, poses itself as the tendentially systematic organization of frightening irrationalities. The anarchy of capitalist production is not cancelled: it is simply socially organized. When the emphasis is posed always and only on the moment of development, and here even on a planned development of capital, it is an attempt to consciously react to that long religious contemplation of the general crisis of capitalism which now has totally reversed itself in a profane imitation of its prodigious technical model of social development. This second attitude is the direct historical result of the first. The opportunistic empiricism that today dominates the international labor movement is the natural offspring of Stalin's scientific opportunism. The only way to re-undertake a correct discourse concerning capitalist society is to rediscover the actual concrete possibilities of the workers' revolution. On the other

33. Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, *op.cit.*, p. 609.
34. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, *op.cit.*, p. 252.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

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hand, these possibilities can only materially arise from the necessary development of capitalist production. Without doubt, the *active* side within the economic relation must be again revaluated: the conscious revolutionary activity of the organized proletariat must be re-examined in the same way that Lenin did before 1917. In addition, this organization of the revolution must be located within an historically determined moment of capitalist development as its external consequence and, at the same time, its internal contradiction: as Marx did in *Capital.* It is not an accident that our sectarianism dogmatically departs only from these texts.

On the level of maximum capitalist stabilization, the plan of capital can also come to socially organize the natural tendency of its production. In other words, it is possible for a social plan of capitalist production to come into being directly from the materially objective existence of a social capital. Yet, it remains unchanged for the whole trajectory of the historical existence of a socio-economic formation of a capitalist kind that "...the cohesion of the aggregate production imposes itself as a blind law upon the agents of production, and not as law which, being understood and hence controlled by their common mind, brings the productive process under their joint control."[36] It is rather a matter of seeing specifically how, on the level of social capital, the *internal* nexus of total production presents itself, and how and why it always poses itself again as a "blind law" in the eyes of the very collective capitalist who fails thereby to harness it, once and for all, to his direct control. The internal nexus of total production is now directly given by social class-relations which contrapose the capitalist society on the one hand to the working-class on the other. The national contract now engages the individual worker—or the workers of a particular sphere of production—no longer against the respective individual capitalists, but against a certain type of general development of social capital. The articulated contracting is, in this sense, nothing more than a normal pluralistic structure—a guarantee of that orderly pull toward the efficiency of the individual enterprises and of the entire system, which always comes from the trade-union activity of the workers. Unions are typical *democratic* institutions of capitalist *planning.* Yet, these very movements of capital, camouflaged and hidden in labor demands reveal, as a fundamental material fact, the growing process of socialization no longer only of capital on the one hand and labor on the other, but of the very general social relation which immediately contraposes them within the process of production. It is the growing generalization and socialization of the *class-struggle* which arises from immediate needs of production and reproduction of social capital.

"*Reproduction on a progressive scale,* i.e., *accumulation,* reproduces the *capital-relation* on a *progressive scale,* more capitalists or larger capitalists

36. *Ibid.,* pp. 251-252.

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at this pole, more wage-workers at that...this reproduction of labour-power forms, in fact, an essential of the reproduction of capital itself. *Accumulation of capital is, therefore, increase of the proletariat.*"[37] It is true that the division of labor grows at the same time and, on this basis, its social productive power also grows—along with the possibility of engaging various forms of economy of labor. But accumulation, and with it the concentration of capital, also represents a material means to increase productivity. Then, the increased mass of means of production, meant to be transformed into capital, must always have at hand, in order to exploit it, a proportionately increased working population. Only the absolute increase of the mass of surplus-value makes possible the increase of the absolute mass of profits. The simultaneous relative decrease of the variable part of capital with respect to the constant part provokes only, and partly, the fall of the rate of profit. On the one hand we have the growth of the absolute *mass* of profit and the relative fall of the *rate* of profit, because, on the other, we have the absolute increase of surplus-value and relative decrease of variable capital. "The law of the progressive falling rate of profit, or the relative decline of appropriated surplus-labour compared to the mass of materialized labour set in motion by living labour, does not rule out in any way that the absolute mass of exploited labour set in motion by the social capital, and consequently the absolute mass of the surplus-labour it appropriates, may grow; nor, that the capitals controlled by individual capitalists may dispose of a growing mass of labour and, hence, of surplus-labour, the latter even though the number of labourers they employ does not increase."[38] Further on Marx will say: this not only *can*, but *must* happen within capitalist production. In other words, it must happen that there be a growing mass of labour and surplus-value in the absolute sense, so that the relative decrease of living labor with respect to objectified labor does not affect, in substance, the increase of the mass of profit and therefore the process of accumulation of capital.

In fact, if it is true that the quantity of additional living labor decreases, it is also true that the non-paid part of the social working day increases with respect to the paid part: surplus-value increases with respect to necessary labor along with relative surplus-value and, therefore, the absolute exploitation of labor. The progress of capitalist exploitation *always* serves as the material base of capital's development. Then, it is only the process of socialization of exploitation that allows capital to organize itself on the social level. This is why the very broadened reproduction of social capital must reproduce on a broadened scale capitalist social relations. Reproduction and accumulation of social capital must reproduce and accumulate labor-power itself as a social class.

37. Marx, *Capital*, vol. I, *op.cit.*, pp. 613-614.
38. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, *op.cit*, p. 212.

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Individual capital, i.e., each fragment of social capital that operates in an autonomous way and as if it had a life of its own, can give to its product whatever natural form. The only condition is that this natural form has a use-value. It is indifferent and altogether accidental that the produced means of production enters anew *as such* in the process of production and that, therefore, constant capital is immediately reproduced in its natural form. What happens with the product of total social capital is something different. Here the part of constant capital produced reappears in the natural form of new means of production which must again function as constant capital. "All the material elements of reproduction must in their bodily form constitute parts of this product."[39] Now, if it is true that variable capital, considered according to value, is equal to the value of labor-power, it is also true that, considered according to its *matter*, it becomes identified with labor-power itself—with living labor put in motion. On the level of social capital, the material element of variable capital cannot be represented other than in its immediate *natural* form, as *social* labor-power. The individual reproduction of the single worker is no longer sufficient. A social reproduction of the collective workers becomes necessary, i.e., the brute survival of labor-power as such is no longer sufficient: what is needed is a process of accumulation of labor-power *for* social capital. Now, labor-power must reappear in that real natural form which is its *social nature*: variable capital must directly re-enter the process of capitalist production as *working class*. There is a long historical moment in which the production of capital finds itself caught in this necessity. All of the processes of rational decomposition of concrete labor which tend to destroy the abstract possibility of its own social organization, find an objective limit in the material necessity of subsequently regaining labor-power itself as an autonomous social force within capital. The apparent "decomposition" of capital and labor, each in its own field, is only the specific form assumed by the process of real internal unification, each in its own terrain, of the capitalist and of the working class.

Collective capital now needs to have before itself collective labor for the economic calculation of its own planned development. Furthermore, it needs to see it not mystified by its own exclusive class interests and not implicated in its own dominating class ideology: hence the need to know labor through the workers and of calculating total labor through the figure of the collective worker. Social capital is forced to socialize the very knowledge of social labor. The single capital, with its limited perspective, comes to see that its profit now does not come only from the labor expanded by him or by his branch of production, and that average profit is different from immediate surplus-value. But "to what extent this profit is

39. Marx, *Capital*, vol. II, *op.cit.*, p. 432.

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due to the aggregate exploitation of labour on the part of the total social capital, i.e., by all his capitalist colleagues—this interrelation is a complete mystery to the individual capitalist; all the more so, since no bourgeois theorists, the political economists, have so far revealed it."[40]

At a certain level of development of capital it is no longer only the worker but the capitalist himself who must fight against the *appearance* of its relations of production. He must come to tear the veil from the phenomena in order to catch the essence and the intrinsic nature of its own process. This is the source of the need for *science within capital*: when capital realizes that it is a social force. At this stage the simple scientific substance of economic relations is no longer sufficient: what is needed are the very economic relations scientifically organized. And it is almost useless to warn that even this is a *tendentious* formula which aims at catching only a side of the problem, in order to identify a basic tendency that guides the process. We have already indicated that the capitalist system will never succeed in reaching a perfect objective rationality of its mechanism of development. Now, here we claim that it aims at this as its maximal program. This is precisely the aim of the science *of* capital: its actual attempt to demystify the social process of capitalist production by rationalizing the form and by programming the content of capitalist development. Everything confirms this: the pure theoretician of the capitalist economy today is the modern bourgeois political man: the planning theoretician is identical with the practical programmer. Furthermore, there is a politics of planning, but there is no theory of planning. The best approximation to a theory of planning is given by the techniques of programming. Which does not mean, then, that there is no longer a bourgeois thought: on the contrary, it means that bourgeois thought is now *wholly* integrated within capital, it functions as an internal mechanism of its development, and no longer serves to justify from outside the present forms of capitalist power. This last function is directly discharged by the traditional organizations of the labor movement. When science is about to pass within social capital, the *ideology* risks of remaining in the hands of the single worker, i.e., in the hands of the disorganized labor movement. True: neo-capitalist ideologies do not *immediately* derive from the only center of power of big capital. As practical *mediation*, they need to pass through the research institutes of labor unions. In a capitalist society which develops on the basis of a socially organized capital, neo-capitalist ideologies correspond to a capitalist organization of the labor movement. It is not true that at this point there is no longer a working class: there is a *working class organized by capital.*

A long series of bothersome questions arise at this level. Up to what point can the fundamental contradiction between the social character of production and the private appropriation of the product be investigated and

40. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, *op.cit.*, p. 167.

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affected by capitalist development? Does not a *specific* form of social appropriation of the private product hide in the process of socialization of capital? Hasn't the very sociality of production become the most important objective mediation of private property? And how can a mediation *contradict* what it mediates? How can a bourgeois sociality of the productive process precipitate into a crisis the *capitalist* appropriation of the product? In other words, how can a capitalist society come into contradiction with the process of production of capital? When the relation of production has become generalized to the level of a general social relation, when all of bourgeois society is reduced to the level of a moment of capitalist production, the very social character of production *can* be regained within the mechanism of reproduction of private capitalist property. At this point, the whole objective mechanism functions within the subjective plan of the collective capitalist. Social production becomes a direct *function* of private property. Society's general representative is now truly *social capital.* In the social relation of production, society's announcer is no longer the working class, but directly capital. The general *social* interest remains entirely in the hands of capital. To the workers remains nothing more than their *partial* class interest. Then, on the one hand we have capital's *social* self-government, and on the other the *class* self-government of organized workers.

Thus, the concept of *working class* comes into being only in this historically concrete level. It becomes articulated in its specific particularity, and develops in all the wealth of its determinations. Hence, the simplest social abstraction of a capitalist economic formation which, therefore, obtains for all the successive forms of its development, appears practically true in this abstraction only as a category of the more modern forms of capitalism. The more capitalist production attacks and dissolves its *external* contradictions, the more it is forced to unveil its *internal* contradictions. The more capital succeeds in organizing itself, the more it is forced to organize for itself the working class, up to the point that the working class need no longer be the *mirror* of all social contradictions: it can directly reflect itself as a social contradiction.

And it is useless to pull out of the archives magic words in order to exorcise this vision. Workeritis (*operaismo*) can also be a real danger when wage-workers are a net minority within the working classes. But is this possible even within a process which tends to reduce everyone who works to a worker? True, in order not to reject the old strategy, new *allies* of the working class are invented: the place left empty by the exterminated masses of poor peasants are filled by the refined *elites* of the new middle classes. Thus, the workers simultaneously get rid of any *sectarian* temptation and any *socialist* perspective. Capitalists know this well: the real generalization of the workers' conditions can introduce the appearance of its formal extinction. It is on this basis that the *specific* concept of labor's power is immediately absorbed in the *generic* concept of popular sovereignty: the

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political mediation here serves to allow the explosive content of labor's productive force to function *peacefully* within the beautiful forms of the modern relation of capitalist production. Because of this, at this level, when the *working class* politically refuses to become *people*, it does not close, but opens the most direct way to the socialist revolution.

Here it is necessary to re-examine the abstraction of the category of "labor." It requires a special analysis. For now, the following elementary considerations are sufficient. Labor "in general" marks the attained indifference toward a kind of determinate labor and at the same time presupposes a very developed totality of real kinds of labor. The two processes are closely connected. The more particular labor becomes concrete, the more easily it is to abstract from it labor in general. "The most general abstractions come about only where there is the richest development of the concrete." It is not by accident that Marx returns to discuss labor in these terms when he deals with the process of levelling of the general rate of profit, through competition. Along with the almost spontaneous mobility of capital here interevenes a mobility guided by labor-power. Labor-power not only can, but *must* be thrown as fast as possible from one sphere of production to another, from a productive locality to another. There is no capitalist development without a high degree of social mobility of workers' labor-power. There is no planning of development without programming the mobility, which requires "indifference of the labourer to the nature of his labour; the greatest possible reduction of labour in all spheres of production to simple labour; the elimination of all vocational prejudices among labourers; and last but not least, a subjugation of the labourer to the capitalist mode of production." [41] Here also, the decisive trait is the subordination of workers to the capitalist mode of production. The indifference of the worker to the nature of his labor—the simple labor of the worker increasingly reduced to simple labor, the *professional prejudices* repudiated by the workers—are not themselves forms of workers' subordination: they are forms of capitalist exploitation. It is the difference between *exploitation* and *Unterwerfung*. Everyone knows, because it is a pretty obvious fact, that within the capitalist mode of production workers certainly are *always exploited*, but they are *never submitted*.

The workers' insubordination can proceed step by step with capitalist exploitation catching, from time to time, the specific ways in which the two processes go *together*. For example, it is clear that today it is a matter of recognizing and cultivating all the *positive* content hidden and mystified within the so-called processes of *alienation*. If this corrupted word still has a meaning, it is only that of expressing a specifically determined form of direct exploitation of labor on the part of capital: *total* estrangement of

41. *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.

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labor with respect to the worker; useful, concrete labor which becomes objectively estranged, external and indifferent to the worker; the end of the trade, of the *profession*, of this last appearance of *individual* independence of the worker, the extreme survival of a bourgeois *person* in the body of the worker. Then, the positive content of alienation is not only the very positive content of capitalist exploitation, taken as the moment in which the answer of labor's antagonism becomes conscious and organized. The process of a total estrangement of labor coincides with its most complete objectification within the process of production of capital. It is only when labor is totally objectified within capitalist production, that the existence of the working class becomes *specifically* contradictory within the system of capital. Not only the product of labor, not only the instruments of production, but all the conditions of labor must become *objective* in the person of capital—and they must, therefore, be torn from the subjectivity of the simple worker, if they are to be subsequently regained as *enemies* of the collective worker. The simple worker must become *indifferent* to his own labor so that the working class can come to *hate it*. Within the class, only the "alienated" worker is truly revolutionary. In fact, there is a moment in which the capitalist is the one who directly comes to the defense of the worker's "personality." Only in its generically *human* figure can labor-power voluntarily submit itself to capital. Only as *human needs* do workers' demands become freely accepted by the capitalist. It is the point in which the worker definitely discovers the "cult of man" as a bourgeois sham.

There are no rights outside of capital. The workers no longer have to defend even the "rights of labor" for, at this level, the rights of labor are the same as those of capital. The trade-union and the union struggle cannot *by themselves* get outside of the system and are destined to be inevitably *part* of its development. The interests of capital are no longer corporate: only the interests of labor outside of capital are. A trade union which, *as such*, i.e., without party and without the political organization of the class, pretends to be *autonomous* from the plan of capital, succeeds only in attaining the most perfect form of integration of the working class within capitalism. Modern unionism, i.e., the party as the transmission belt of the trade-union, is the highest form of capitalist reformism. It is the way in which the objective need of capitalist production of regaining the real political terrain of the class struggle is over-run and at the same time utilized within the subjective initiative of capital. There are no doubts about this. If someone pretends to interpret this in economistic and objectivistic terms he has understood nothing of it. "In purely economic terms, i.e., *from the bourgeois viewpoint*," says Marx, in order to indicate that within the terrain of economic competition with the capitalist, the workers are systematically defeated: on this ground they have no other choice than to improve the conditions of their own exploitation. When we purposely keep silent about the traditional *objective* contradictions of the system to the

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point of making them disappear altogether within its specific mechanism of development, the aim is to consciously regain the true discourse concerning the *workers*—which is a *political* discourse concerning political organization and political power. And this, too, must be done in a newly determinate sense. When science itself is objectified within capital, socialism is in turn forced to become again *scientific*. Insurrection as a work of art only now turns into a science of revolution. Thus, a true workers' planning of the revolutionary process must and can be an answer to the programming that social capital makes of its own development. True, it is not enough to ideally contrapose the plan of capital: it is necessary to know how to utilize it materially. And this is impossible other than by contraposing to the *economic* program of capitalist development a *political* plan of labors' answers. Nowadays both capital and labor, each in its own field, see very far and plan in terms of a long perspective. It is a matter of strategy against strategy: the tactic should be left to the bureaucrats of the two camps.

As we have already indicated, the working class must consider as a privileged fact the existence of capital, it must evaluate the successive forms of its development and altogether materially anticipate them in an antagonistic form within its own organization. Then, within the very process of socialization of capital, in the course of the development leading social capital to become the representative of the general interest, the working class is forced to begin to organize its own *partial* interest and directly manage its own *particular power*. When capital is unveiled as a social force, and upon this basis it gives rise to a *capitalist society*, it does not leave any alternative to the working class other than opposing itself to this whole sociality of capital. Workers no longer have to contrapose the ideal of a *true society* to the *false society* of capital: they no longer have to release and dilute themselves within the general social relation. They can now re-find and re-discover their own class as an anti-social revolutionary force. Today, without possibility of mediation, the *whole* society of capital stands in front of the working-class. The relation is finally reversed: the only thing that the general interest cannot mediate within itself is the irreducible partiality of the workers' interest. Hence, we have the bourgeois call to *social* reason against the *sectorial* demands of the workers. The same relation that exists, at a certain level, between social capital and the single capitalists is sought between capital and labor: as functionaries put it, an always "dialectical" relationship. In fact, when collective labor agrees to reasonably participate in the general development, it ends up by functioning as just another part of collective social capital. On this road the only thing attainable is the most balanced and rational development of *all* of capital. It is at this point that the working class must instead consciously organize itself as an *irrational* element within the specific rationality of capitalist production. The growing rationalization of modern capital must find an insurmountable limit in the growing unreasonableness of organized workers, i.e., in the workers' refusal

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to *political* integration within the economic development of the system. Thus, the working class becomes the only *anarchy* that capitalism fails to socially *organize.* The task of the labor movement is to scientifically organize and politically manage *this* labor anarchy within capitalist production. On the model of the society organized by capital, the labor party itself can only be the *organization of anarchy* no longer within, but outside of capital, i.e., outside of its development.

But we must be more specific: it is not a matter of creating chaos within the productive process. It is a matter of "organizing the systematic disorganization of production" and this is what is meant by neo-anarcho-syndicalism. And it is altogether unnecessary to hide behind this absurd left-over, the totally new perspectives which only today are opening up for the class-struggle. Nor must we, on the other hand, contrapose a workers' management to a capitalist management of the modern industrial enterprise or of the "productive center." First of all there is no productive center by itself, and we *only* have the capitalist industrial enterprise. Secondly, the workers happily leave the management of this enterprise to the owners in the same way that they leave to the collective capitalist the general management of society while holding themselves only the *political* self-management of their own class power which starts from the factory and seeks to reach the State. The simple request of real political labor power autonomous and distinct from real bourgeois political power is now able to precipitate into a crisis the economic mechanism of the system thus preventing it from functioning. There is the point where the whole discourse reverses itself. It is the material base upon which all that is a function of capital acquires the possibility of becoming directly functional to the revolution *against* capital. From labor's viewpoint, the integral control of the social process becomes all the more possible as capital becomes *social capital.* Labor's articulation of the entire capitalist mechanism now unveils itself at the center of the system as the arbiter of its further development or of its definitive crisis. The internal planning of the factory and the programming of capitalist development, i.e., the bourgeois knowledge of the process of production can be utilized in a form antagonistic to the system and instrumentalized for revolutionary goals. Science itself within capital can become the woof of a unitary re-composition of working class thought thus provoking by force a theory of the revolution wholly integrated within the working class. Thus, even the shop and sectorial integration of labor-power becomes an instrument of direct knowledge of the productive apparatus on the part of workers and the recognition of the determinate form that capitalist exploitation assumes at this level. The techniques of economic integration tried by the owner—an objective need of the production of capital—become tools of political control *over* capital, thus means of workers' self-management.

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An insubordinate use of integration becomes possible. Concretely, this is the revolutionary use of capitalist development. Only at this point the organized labor movement *can* and therefore *must* continually *overthrow* the instruments of domination of capital into means of insubordination of labor thus coercing through violence the objective needs of capitalist production to function as subjective instances of revolutionary workers.

The theoretical formulation of a total revolutionary strategy on this level is no longer only possible, but becomes absolutely necessary for the foundation of the very revolutionary process. The objective anarchy of the working class within capitalism must now express itself at the highest level of consciousness. None of its elements can any longer be abandoned to spontaneity: everything points back to a scientific prediction of the revolution and to its consequent rigorous organization. *Spontaneism* belongs always and only to the "masses" in a general sense: never to the workers of large factories. Working people often love to explode in unforeseen acts of disorderly protest. Not so with the working class: the people have only their own rights to defend while the working-class must demand power. Thus it demands, first of all, that the struggle for power be *organized.* No one is more inclined than us today to wholly accept the Leninist thesis: "In its struggle for power the working class has only one weapon: organization." Workers do not move unless they feel themselves to be organized, i.e., if they do not know that they are *armed* in the struggle. They are serious people: they never seek self-destruction. They are a social *class* of producers and not a *group* of miserable oppressed. Today they will not move unless they have a revolutionary plan which is explicitly organized. Party programs are useless: revolutionary strategy must not be confused with certain areas of demands. It is not a matter of contracting today the individual points in order to subsequently challenge tomorrow the whole of power. It is exactly the opposite: the demand for power must precede everything. Only in this fashion is *everything* organized for the conquest of power. The dominating class must be immediately *challenged* concerning political domination: subsequently it is also possible to *contract* with it regarding the ground of the struggle.

The first step always remains the regaining of an irreducible workers' partiality against the entire social system of capital. Nothing will take place without *class hatred:* neither the elaboration of the theory, nor the practical organization. Only from a rigorously working-class viewpoint will the total movement of capitalist production be comprehended and utilized as a *particular* moment of the workers' revolution. Only onesidedness, in science and in struggle, opens the way both to the understanding of everything and to its destruction. Any attempt to assume the *general interest,* every temptation to stop at the level of *social science,* will only serve to better inscribe the working class within the development of capital. The class-based

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political action of the workers could also eliminate the problem of sectarianism. It is the working class' thought which *must* be sectarian, i.e., it must become *part* of an organic system of new power organized in new revolutionary forms. No more illusions are possible: at the level of a developed capitalism it is not possible to continue to follow the movement of capital other than in organization of a decisive class struggle against the whole capitalist society. The Marxist analysis of capitalism will not go forward any more unless it finds a working class theory of revolution. And the latter will be useless if it will not be embodied in real material forces. And this will not exist for society other than when they will be politically organized in a class against it.

Hence, the impasse in which the discourse is caught when it wants to be sectarian but complete: between the will to calmly start looking for the objective reasons guiding a long historical process, and the necessity to immediately find the subjective forces which organize in order to overthrow it. We have on the one hand the patience of research and on the other the urgency of the answer. The theoretical vacuum in the middle is a vacuum of political organization. There is a right to experiment, which is the only one to be practically vindicated. Up to that point everything will take place in a rapid clash between immediately contradictory concepts. We are *forced* to jump ahead. We do without mediation because of our hatred for opportunism.

We must go back now to see *concretely* what is wage labor at the highest level of capital, how is the working-class composed at the maximum level of development of capitalism, what is its material internal organization and why and under what conditions it can come to materialize a revolutionary process directly grounded in the working class, and *therefore*, socialist. The above is nothing more than the general premise of this specific discourse. Everything is yet to be sought. Up to now we only have "the attempt of a dissolution and the hint of a synthesis..."

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NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

"Socialism" in Hungary

Over the last three years a number of contributions from members of the "Budapest School" have appeared in Telos. *Because they dared to put forth bold new ideas critical of the official "line" these writers are now under fire from the pseudo-Marxist ruling bureaucracy. They have lost their jobs, they have been forbidden to travel abroad, and they are now enjoined from further publishing their ideas. The following three documents speak for themselves. The first one is a general account of some of the main ideas of the group. The second is the official accusation that eventually led to their censure, and the third is one of the papers that provoked the massive bureaucratic reaction.*

*The Budapest School**

by Serge Frankel and Daniel Martin

Among the countries of the Warsaw Pact, Hungary may be the one in which radical critique has developed most strongly, particularly in regard to theory. This New Left originates from two different sources. One is critical social theory based on Marxism. During the sixties, this critical theory was allowed to develop, the leading ideas could be formulated and published—of course, within certain limits which, however, were rather broad if compared with the Soviet Union. The second area of critique is less well defined, a lot more vague: it is the spirit of Marxist values that rose from the ashes of reified official ideology which conceives of itself as "Marxism."

Larger and larger numbers of non-conformist young people are affected by this rebirth of Marxist values, which are essentially anti-bureaucracy. Young people, in general, with the exception of a critical minority and a minority of careerists, remain loyal to Western values, just like the generations before them. The Western values provided the basis for Hungarian social critique, since the development of a genuine internal critique was blocked. Western values reaching the country—through Radio Free Europe, the Voice of America, the visits of emigrants, and even through the carefully screened cultural import—were given a position of monopoly by the government and appealed to broad segments of the population as the only alternative to the frustrating reality of the government, thus turning into fantastic

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myths and illusions. This monopoly "made in the West" was broken as soon as the internal or indigenous critique could be discussed in public—in part through the politics of Janos Kadars and his group. As can be imagined, the emergence of an indigenous critique had important consequences for the Hungarian society and its internal dynamics, which were permitted to unfold without imposed constraints.

Obviously, within this indigenous critique, the approach of the New Left constitutes a minority; the other approach, which could be labelled "technocratic" is significantly stronger, since it represents the differentiated (pluralistic) interests of the bureaucracy. This technocratic approach is in a much better position to channel the dynamics of social change than is the approach of the radical Left which seeks to represent the powerless and disenfranchised masses. The possibility towards a development of an indigenous critique—constituting an alternative to the "Western" critique has been sharply curtailed in all of Eastern Europe as a consequence of the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia. The intervention signalled the beginning of the general suppression of indigenous critiques in all countries under Soviet influence, and conservative forces were encouraged. The reactionary process, which started in 1968, has recently taken a new turn in Hungary, where it affects particularly the New Left. (In Hungary, economic and social reforms have been sharply blocked since 1968.) The irony of history: of all the people, it was none other than György Aczel, cultural delegate in the party leadership, international star of the "Hungarian cultural liberalism" (especially popular with the Italian and French Communist Parties) who in a forceful speech started the attack against the "renegades," the "pseudo-revolutionaries," the "romantics of the petty bourgeoisie," the "revisionists," the "anarchists of the New Left" who objectively represent reactionary forces by aping bourgeois ideology, etc. Aczel frequently used the term "New Left," and the "New Left" and the "Old Left" is crucial. We, too, apply the term. Sometimes we also refer to the "Radical Left"—being aware of the vagueness of the concepts and not knowing whether the persons whom they designate would accept them.[1]

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1. Those attacked were, among others: Mária Márkus and András Hegedüs (sociologists), Mihaly Vajda and Agnes Heller (philosophers and students of Georg Lukács). They were named by Aczel in the Regional Conference on Agitation, Propaganda, and Culture, that met in Budapest on January 24-25, 1973. In the following, we shall give some samples of the tone set by Aczel—the main speaker—for the conference. After mouthing the usual phrases on the necessity "to close ranks ideologically," he singled out the New Left for his attack, particularly its social theories. He specifically aimed at Mária Márkus and András Hegedüs. "The revisionism of the 'New Left' and the right that borrows its pseudo-revolutionary slogans from romantic anti-capitalism and sometimes employs Marxist phrases finds few followers among us. Nevertheless, these theories like all other politically dangerous and ideologically incorrect thoughts constitute a danger to larger or smaller segments of our youth." Aczel accused the New Left of "objectively playing a reactionary role" and of "having integrated itself into the Capitalist system" of the West, in contrast to the unions and the Communist parties. In Hungary, unlike in the West, "The New Left's petit bourgeois critique" would not be a crisis-phenomenon. "The moral effeminacy, the petit bourgeois spirit creates disgust and rebellion among the older generation. It is obvious that the best among our youth feel more and more repelled by it. But this revolt can become socially damaging if the young—and not only the young—do not learn how they should fight against these phenomena intelligently and properly. The pseudo-revolutionary theories are also dangerous to the extent to which they depoliticize and de-ideologize, and thus they must necessarily fail." Aczel stated that Márkus and Hegedüs are of the opinion that "currently rather than building socialism, a process of

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Aczel's attack was followed by an investigation which might lead to the branding of the accused as "anti-Marxist"; for the time being, they are barred from publishing, lecturing, etc. Simultaneously, foreign travel is forbidden, both in the West as well as in the East.

Let us now take a closer look at the social critique of the Hungarian radical Left. Their main representatives are András Hegedus and Mária Márkus, who are frequently co-authors. Our study is based primarily on the works of these two writers.

Their current perspectives crystallized during the mid-sixties and took a radical turn after the events in Czechoslovakia and France in 1968, as did the views of the non-orthodox Left, in general. There can be no doubt that the Budapest School, founded by Georg Lukács, is of overriding importance as a basis for their theoretical and ideological orientation. Originally, the Budapest School was mostly concerned with philosophy. Those radical Hungarian sociologists that were influenced by the School contributed, in turn, to its "sociological socialization." The School's essential orientation is ideological, and since the Weltanschauung of the radical sociologists is very similar to the School's, it is possible to make a connection in the sense that the School encompasses sociology as well. Aczel directed his attacks mostly against the School, but attempting to separate it from its founder, Lukács, and to claim him for the regime. This strategy of claiming critics of the regime posthumously as pro-regime is an old ruse. During his last year, Lukács became more and more radical. For the sake of objectivity, it must be emphasized, however, that during his life the School was less radical than it is today.

What is the main characteristic of the Budapest School? Its most important (general) feature is its critical orientation towards the theory and practice of the so-called socialist countries (especially in Europe). This orientation is based on a Marxist ethics, as well as on an analysis of objective reality. The following statement by Lukács may be considered as the guiding principle of the School: A revival of Marxism "requires two processes: methodologically, back to Marx; for the understanding of reality, a forward move towards a Marxist interpretation of contemporary phenomena."[2] Obviously, this is not enough to define the orientation, but a full account of it is not possible within the limits of the present study.

On the Nature of East-European Societies

In this context, the theory of bureaucratic organization is of central importance. Weber's theory, and more recently, the theory of formal organizations, has strongly influenced the perspective of radical Hungarian sociologists on bureaucracy. They have concluded that the problems of the so-called socialist European countries cannot be reduced to factors that are either exclusively external or subjective and

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'modernization' is taking place in the Socialist countries that—while not restoring private ownership of the means of production—would essentially produce a profit-oriented greedy society." This has nothing in common with Marxism, the cause of Socialism. The discussion has gone beyond the ideological and scientific framework in which it could be possible and useful. And Aczel quoted Lukács... Poor Lukács, who is misused after his death (1971) to justify the suppression of his own students!

2. Interview with Lukács on "Some Questions on Peaceful Coexistence." "Kortars," Budapest, May 1968, in Hungarian.

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personal; they are neither dysfunctions, nor the treason of the power elite. Instead, the problems must be seen in relation to structural factors inherent in the nature of socio-economic forms. Consequently, societies giving rise to these forms have little in common with socialism, for which several generations of revolutionaries sacrificed their lives. As seen by the Hungarian radicals, the society as exemplified by the Eastern countries constitutes a new type. It is a dialectical negation of capitalism and of the socio-structural mechanisms based on the private ownership of the means of production. Marx would have called this type of society a new formation; but he could not anticipate its emergence, in spite of some ingenious insights. There are some people who insist on applying the classic Marxist theorems and concepts on contemporary social systems, no matter what; and they believe that they have discovered that any society that is non-socialist must, by necessity, be capitalist. These critics of East-European societies were, however, the only radical critics that adhered to a Marxist framework. Their formalistic preference for the Marxist conceptual apparatus kept them, however, from following the only road that alone leads away from the dead end in which contemporary theory (and practice) is trapped. They would have to follow the spirit of Marx in order to accomplish the transformation that is necessary in order to radically break with the bureaucratic structure, even though it calls itself Marxist. This is the only way possible to help towards the emergence of a social movement that would neither be hooked to the bureaucratic structure, nor would it end up in a bureaucratic *cul de sac*, as it has up till now. Only a theoretical transformation (*Umwälzung*) within the framework of the cultural tradition which can be called Marxism can provide a realistic—even though painful—analysis of contemporary society. A radical change in society towards the original purposes of Marxism requires such an analysis. It is our opinion that the Hungarian Radical Left provides this analysis that—admittedly still in an embryonic stage—will eventually have tremendous significance towards the creation of a new revolutionary approach, particularly in relation to industrial society.

"Bureaucracy emerged during a certain stage of the division of labor, when the functions of the performance of property rights and social rule became separated from the owners as well as the actual producers, i.e., the ruling class. This was at a point when social integration had reached such a level that these functions could be performed only by an organization characterized by hierarchical structure, functional specialization, and technological complexity. Given these complex social conditions, the owner—whether individual or collective—is no longer able to perform the functions that result from the basic property relationships. He has to share his power with those who are qualified (to perform these functions). Hierarchically organized and technically competent, this group, while performing its function, simultaneously pursues its own special interests."[3]

The bureaucratic structure was characteristic for the "Asiatic mode of production" and it also fulfilled important functions in other areas in antiquity. It dominated the large religious organizations and had a crucial part in the process of political centralization which has led to the emergence of the absolute state with its

3. András Hegedüs, "Marx on the Principles of Bureaucracy," in *Magyar Tudomany*, Budapest, April 1966, p. 124 (in Hungarian).

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huge bureaucracy. The formation of super-organizations in the economic sector as well, is a requisite for industrial civilization. The immensely complex coordination of these huge organizations requires a bureaucratic structure; their absence would make it impossible to control phenomena of these dimensions. Whatever their divergencies, industrial societies share the tendency toward the establishment of large bureaucratic organizations. They are the only form adequate to the modern mode of production and they tend to displace more or less gradually (and sometimes radically) all other structural relationships in all areas of social life thus becoming the dominating structure.

"It is not exaggerated to state that without a sociological conception of bureaucracy,[4] or—more precisely—without an understanding of the nature of bureaucratic relations which exist both within the leadership as well as between leadership and society, it is impossible to grasp the reality of capitalism or socialism."[5] One of the essential features of the Budapest School is the conception that man creates himself through action, and thus makes his own history. Man and history are therefore not determined by some predestined abstract universal laws that control the concrete struggles between men and groups—struggles that ultimately determine the course of history. This idea goes back to the twenties, not only to Lukács, but to other Marxist theoreticians as well, like Antonio Gramsci and Karl Korsch. Today, the Budapest School conceives of it as follows: "The individual as well as whole generations move in a sphere (*Raum*) circumscribed objectively by given conditions, within a range of possibilities or alternatives, development towards which may be narrower or wider, depending on the historical moment. Man chooses among these possibilities and the realization of this or that alternative is determined by the sum total of human activities. There are innumerable and frequently accidental causes for these activities, but they are integrated—consciously or unconsciously—into a totality. Man, according to Lukács, is by nature reflexive; he always reacts to those alternatives that emerge in the social process. He is able to transform spontaneous contradictions in history into questions which he consciously seeks to answer."[6]

During the first few years after the October Revolution, the following three historical alternatives were open:[7] The first was Trotsky's as articulated immediately after the revolution (and radically different from his later views). The plan was to establish a group of ruling agencies, centralized, monolithic, absolutist,

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4. This is not to be confused with the idea that bureaucracy is to be equated with a certain part of the bureaucratic superstructure, e.g., the state apparatus, or with organizations that function poorly. Ideas similar to those expressed here use a somewhat different terminology, e.g., techno-bureaucracy, technocracy, techno-structure, etc.

5. A. Hegedüs, "Marx on the Principles of Bureaucracy," *op.cit.*, p. 213. The use of such concepts as "capitalism" or "socialism" by the Radical Hungarian Left is axiologically neutral. "Capitalism" is simply to be understood as a society where the means of production are privately owned, "Socialism" means that this has been abolished. The use of such concepts facilitates the enormously complex problem of communication in public under present political conditions.

6. György Márkus, "Discussions and Trends in Marxist Philosophy," in *Kortas*, Bueapest, July 1968 (in Hungarian). See also by the same author *Marxism and Anthropology* (Budapest, 1971), p. 97 (in Hungarian).

7. András Hegedüs, "On Alternatives to Social Development," in *Kortas*, Budapest, June 1968 (in Hungarian).

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and not to be controlled by workers. This alternative was later chosen by Stalin. Most Eastern European countries, up till today, are patterned after it, even though the extremes of Stalinism have been reduced. The backwardness and the economic isolation experienced by the early Soviet Republic gave priority to growth in quantitative economic output, as against the idea of creating humane social relationships. The accelerated accumulation required bureaucratic forms of coordination,[8] organizations with structural stability which identified with the general social interest in growth while denying to represent special interests.

"Once the working masses are in control, then the state—as a workers' state—can have no other interest but the workers'." This is the stereotype by which this alternative presents itself. It follows as a matter of course that any critique of the state, or, rather, of its leadership, is directed against the people and, consequently, is counterrevolutionary. This absolutist, intolerant political system has no room for autonomous orientations vis-a-vis the state. In the beginning, while extensive growth predominated, the system was not a severe obstacle to social dynamics. But when growth became intensive and required structural reforms, which could not be limited to the imitations of structures characteristic of more highly developed countries, the system did turn into a major obstacle to social development.[9]

Marxism, under Stalinism, became increasingly more simplified, its social function of insight and self-criticism was reduced to a mere justification and apologetics.[10] Initially, this might have served a certain socio-historical purpose towards the survival and functioning of the new social system. But when the latter consolidated, over time, the theory became more and more conservative. It froze into formulae almost totally divorced from reality, it became a "Marxist" mask for a philosophy that removed itself further and further from the interests of the people. It took on an increasingly reactionary character with the progressive stabilization of the economic and social base of bureaucratic domination.[11]

After the 20th Party Congress of the Russian Communist Party, an attempt was made to modernize official ideology. "This 'modernization' appears most frequently as the attempt to supplement official ideology by sociological concepts, which neither question its basic orientation, nor the apologetic function it is asked to perform. Within this scheme, there is room for empirical sociological research, which is essentially meant to provide illustrations for already given theoretical generalizations. These generalizations are not to be confronted with reality, and the findings are not to test their validity."[12]

The second possible alternative during the first few years of the October Revolution was the "Workers' Opposition." It required that the functionaries on all

8. See András Hegedüs, "Bureaucracy and Socialism" chapter on "Bureaucracy and Society" in the collection *Introduction to Economic Sociology*, edited by F. Nemes, Karl Marx University, Budapest, 1967, pp. 68-88 (manuscript, in Hungarian).

9. Mária Márkus, Andras Hegedus, "Modernization and the Alternatives to Social Progress." Paper given at the International Sociological Conference on Modernization, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw, June 11-18, 1972. Reprinted in this issue.

10. Andras Hegedus, "Self Criticism of Socialist Society as Reality and Necessity," in *Etudes Sociologiques Hongroises*, a collective study directed by Andras Hegedus (Paris: Anthropos, 1969), pp. 15-18.

11. A. Hegedüs and M. Márkus, "Main Trends in Marxist Sociology in the Socialist Countries," in *Kortars*, Budapest, December, 1968 (in Hungarian).

12. *Op.cit.*

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levels of economic control (from foreman to people's commissar) should be elected by the workers or the unions representing the workers. This demand to syndicalize the state (rather than state control of the unions, as conceived in the first alternative) did not consider the questions in relation to the bureaucratization of the unions raised by Sidney and Beatrice Webb at the beginning of the century, and a little later, by Rosa Luxemburg and Robert Michels. A syndicalization of the state and the economy would have actually increased the trend toward the bureaucratization of the unions, since their functions had expanded considerably.[13] By the way, this second alternative was, at least in part, tried out during the Yugoslav experiment.

The third alternative, which is currently being worked out theoretically by the Hungarian Left, tries to learn from the first two alternatives. With the insights gained by the enormous development of the social sciences, particularly in the areas concerned with problems of social control (*Gesellschaftsführung*), an attempt is made to analyse the consequences of the various alternatives. This leads to a basic question which has, in our opinion, been given novel answers by the Hungarian Radical sociology. These answers can help to cut through many illusions whose objective function is to serve certain parts of the bureaucracy. Above all, it is crucial to understand the tremendous socio-historical importance of bureaucracy.

The new alternative for social development based on Marxism is premised on socio-economic conditions that could not be anticipated by Marx. The conception of this alternative "accepts, in part, the fact that a specialized system of coordination offers quicker and more efficient solutions in all important areas of social life, as compared to self government by laymen. As a consequence, it is unavoidable that the social development, in its present stage, brings about the establishment of specialized systems of coordination with their own interests, aims, and discretionary authority. On the other hand, specialized systems of coordination necessarily lead to the formation of special interests which are in contradiction to the interests of society, in general. These particularistic interests are, in addition, unavoidably related to the claim for uncontrolled power. At any rate, it will be necessary to create a relationship of effective social dependence to which the specialized systems of coordination must submit. Put differently, the issue is the institution of mechanisms of social control over the power of specialized systems of coordination.

Marx considered as his final goal a society without controls; this can be reched only if controls have ceased to exist; as long as this is not the case, institutionalized social control is a necessity. Today the power is in the hands of specialized systems of coordination. The impossibility to control this power results in a multiplicity of dangers and negative phenomena. They can only be eliminated or reduced through means of effective social control. The problem is all the more serious, since—within the framework of the two other alternatives, mentioned above—specialized systems of coordination emerge on all levels and in all areas of social life, which steadily increase in stability, usurp the monopoly on the ability to govern, and which apply increasingly subtle methods to sociologically and psychologically influence human behavior." As Hegedüs comments, the third alternative is already implicit but not clearly stated in Lenin's thoughts of the early twenties. Considering the alternative

13. For a discussion of the role of the unions in the early Soviet Republic, see András Hegedüs, "On the Relevance of the Union Issue," in *Uj Iras*, Budapest, October 1968 (in Hungarian).

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of state control of the unions as against the syndicalization of the state, i.e., an all-powerful uncontrollable bureaucracy, Lenin denied their necessity (without, however, suggesting a viable alternative), but he argued for efficient, stable leadership, which should and could be controlled by the workers. Over time, the control by workers would become stronger and stronger, until finally the majority of the workers would be able—through education and experience—to make the transition from mere control to active participation in social leadership. A professional stratum of leaders monopolozing control in theory and practice would thus eventually become obsolete. In an earlier study, Hegedüs and Márkus investigated the trends in the countries of Eastern Europe that call themselves "socialist" from a somewhat different perspective, using a typology that was less abstract.[14] "Concerning the imagery of the future and alternatives for development, at least two important trends can be distinguished in the countries of Eastern Europe. The first model, state-oriented, exercises a very strong influence by using official channels. It projects contemporary structures into the future. Even though it is amenable (and sometimes has to be) to certain changes, it is really not a dynamic model. Modernization, even if understood in its most narrow sense, does not only mean constant change within the system, but also changes that transcend system boundaries." This model was conceived during the period of extensive growth and commodity scarcity. But it equates socialism with the theorems and solutions dating from this period. Consequently, it is criticized particularly in those countries where extensive growth has been replaced by intensive growth. Expressions of this critique are in attempts toward reform (mostly economic reforms). "In most instances, these reforms are no more than attempts to modernize the old solutions." The second trend, "the main road," represents "the idea, directly or indirectly, that the East European countries have to take essentially the same road as the developed Western countries." According to this approach, it is the level of development that determines life style, needs, the structure of production and consumption, the forms of control and organization, etc.[15]

Discussion between proponents of the two models focuses primarily on the role of the market in production and consumption and on the question of the control and regulation of economic processes. Adherents to the "main road" consider the first model as inefficient and static. "They regard the profit motive inherent in a market economy as the main force of production and, therefore, as the only way to lead to dynamic development (change). As a result, they believe that human greed would be the most important motive in economic behavior. In their opinion, the development of market relations is the only road towards the decentralization and (to a certain degree) the democratization of the administrative control of the state over the economy. It is in this form that freedom in the individual's choice of consumer items can be increased, which would have positive consequences for production."

This line of argument draws support from the fact that the growth rates of the Western European countries have approximated the Eastern countries, while the latter record a levelling off. To be sure, this technocratic and technistic alternative can contribute considerably towards the solution of those problems which were

14. Mária Markus and András Hegedüs, "Modernization and the Alternatives..." *op.cit.*

15. See also Márkus and Hegedüs, "Choice of Alternatives and Priorities in the Perspective Planning of Distribution and Consumption," in *Koezgazdasagi Szemle*, Budapest, September 1969 (in Hungarian).

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created by the state-oriented alternative, problems that are also related to the scarcity of commodities caused by the lack of economic rationality, with the curtailment of personal freedom, with the life style decreed by authoritarianism, etc. But the second alternative, while presenting the life styles and consumer habits of the most advanced societies and while emphasizing the material differences between social groups, does not necessarily usher in the happiness of the masses, no matter how much it mesmerizes them.

Towards a Transformation of Everyday Life and a New Society

There is a fundamental principle in Marx, and its explication is of crucial significance for the Hungarian New Left. As stated by the Hungarian philosopher Agnes Heller: "Marx, in fact, did have a fundamental universal value axiom from which all his values and value judgments can be axiologically derived. This ontologically primary and empirically underivable category is abundance (*Reichtum*). What is "abundance"? *It is the many-sided unfolding of the essential power of the species.* Thus, we obtain the first value-axiom: value is whatever helps the enrichment of the powers of the species; and the second value axiom: the highest value is *the ability of individuals* to appropriate the abundance of the species. Marx actually derived all values from the above two value axioms."[16]

One of the basic problems for social progress, as seen by the Hungarian Radical Left, is formation of a new life style, a new everyday life (which is not to be mistaken for "humanizing," as used by theories on "human relations"). It should give every individual the possibility to realize his or her full potential [*vielseitig entwickeln*]. This new life style should make it possible for everybody to consciously choose priorities for themselves.

The alternative chosen by the Hungarian Radical Sociologists is to be brought about by a broad mass movement. They do not try to substitute one clique in the power elite by another, a move that might be more or less costly in social terms. The final result of this would only be to replace bureaucrats by workers or intellectuals who, in turn, would have to become bureaucrats. Thus, the aim of the mass movement is not to adopt the functions of bureaucracy, but to make it responsible to the masses. What is involved is a "humanization" of everyday life and social relations, in close ties to the active and continued participation of people in directing and shaping their social lives (so far, in human history, this has been the case only in major social upheavals).[17] From the perspective of social progress, and, particularly, of the manifold development of the individual, "the main problem is whether and how it is possible to overcome 'reification' that is inherent in consumer society and that reduces individual freedom essentially to 'choices' among prefabricated commodities, plastic merchandise; is it possible to create social conditions which encourage personal freedom and thus orient man towards humanity?"[18]

The life style generated by the struggle for "humanization" and "social control" is practically non-existent in the so-called Socialist European countries. Instead, the

16. Agnes Heller, "Hypothesis for a Marxist Theory of Value" in *Filozofiai Szemle*, Budapest, 1970, p. 771 (in Hungarian). English translation titled "Towards a Marxist Theory of Value," *Kinesis*, Fall 1972, vol. V, no. 1, p. 19.

17. Mária Márkus and András Hegedüs, "Community and Individual," *Kortars*, Budapest, December 1970, p. 1933 (in Hungarian).

18. *Ibid.*, p. 1925.

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way of life of a "consumer society" appeals to a large proportion of the population as the most attractive model for progress. Its influence is increased, since neither theory nor practice create new life styles consistent with socialist values.[19]

Even if the model of the "main road" could "provide the population with more comfortable living conditions (without restoring private ownership of the means of production), it could lead to a society that is essentially profit-oriented, a greedy society." The struggle for a new way of life is a struggle for a "radical transformation" of the so-called Socialist countries, and "the practical realization of this socialist trend cannot depend on the rulers, even if those had the best intentions; it can only be accomplished through the initiative and activity of the masses."[20]

In the development of the personality, work plays a fundamental role. Today, most people spend the major part of their lives on work. The position in the social division of labor now determines to a much larger extent than legal property rights (or their absence) the status of the individual in the social structure, and hence the value system, interests, life style, tastes (preferences), aspirations, in short, one's entire life.[21] Work in modern society is alienated labor: the social division of labor prevents most men from developing their personality through work, from controlling the process of production and the social development.[22] According to some theories, a multi-faceted development of personality can be achieved outside the work process, without radical change in the mode of work and work organization. Mária Márkus and András Hegedüs prove sociologically that "leisure and the world of work are closely interrelated, and consequently it is impossible to introduce drastic changes into one sphere while the other remains constant." A mere increase in "leisure time," i.e., time not spent working, does not bring about any significant results under present conditions. "Disillusioning experiences and sociological research show that an increase in non-working time, as such, does not change men's life style, but instead provides the opportunity to increase or develop certain activities that satisfy the most intensely felt needs."[23] How can the life-long exclusive commitment to a specific type of work be negated or, at least, loosened? According to the two authors, this would require an educational system and an organization of work "which would not fix the position of the individual in the division of labor for his entire life, but give him the awareness to constantly seek his

19. *Ibid.*, p. 1927.
20. *Ibid.*
21. See András Hegedüs, "On the Structure of Socialist Society," Budapest, 1966, *Social Structure and Division of Labor* (Budapest, 1966).
22. Agnes Heller writes: "Alienation does not mean that the unfolding powers of the species are not those of individuals but that the latter unfold *one-sidedly* in virtue of their being 'distributed' by the social division of labor so that the majority of men are not able to develop certain higher order capabilities. Thus, the stage of alienation does not represent real abundance, although it is the necessary and historical precondition to it. 'For real abundance is the developed productive force of *all* individuals.' Consequently, alienation is not simply the discrepancy between the species' and the individual's abundance. Marx did not postulate communism only as a society in which the capabilities of individuals could unfold, but one in which individual abundance can become an *end in itself* for every man...alienation 'impoverishes' the individual by allowing him to develop only certain capabilities at the expense of others, and by reducing the abundance of the senses to one sense: the sense of 'having'." "Towards a Marxist Theory of Value," *op.cit.*, pp. 20-21.
23. Hegedüs and Márkus, "Leisure and Division of Labor," *Koezgazdasagi Szemle*, Budapest, October 1971, p. 1157.

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true identity and to create the preconditions that make it possible for the worker at any time in his life to change his occupation and his area of activity."[24]

Instead of the present educational system that is created to prepare the individual for a specific occupation and that considers knowledge only as a means for upward social mobility, an educational system would be needed which, in addition to specialized training, would provide general education and prepare man to control social relations and be master of his own fate. The present regime cannot accept such an educational model. The higher the general level of education, the higher the dissatisfaction of the people, the more critical they become towards work and society in general. The authors stress that such dissatisfaction would be, however, a very positive phenomenon, since it would force dynamic changes in the organization of work as well as in society in general. Here we come to the crucial point: the dialectical negation of bureaucratic society. Would this negation coincide with the negation of what Marx and Engels referred to as class society? That is, a society that can be called dichotomized, because it is ultimately based on a dichotomy in the division of labor which divides between groups that are in permanent and (structurally determined) necessary conflict. (Some rule, most follow orders, the former take advantage of it and create social relations that correspond to their special interests.) Unfortunately, this idea is not yet developed in the approach of the Radical Hungarian Sociologists, it could almost be said that it seems to be an afterthought. Only a radical transformation of the division of labor in order to eliminate the monopoly on control (which characterizes not only bureaucratic societies, but dichotomous societies as well) could bring about the process of "social control" and the "humanization" of social life. Concerning this issue (which, by the way, has hardly been elaborated theoretically by the Radical Left, in general) we have reservations as to the revolutionary approach of the sociologists referred to above. We consider it as too optimistic as far as workers' control over bureaucracy is concerned, bureaucracies in general, as well as the no less bureaucratized structures of unions, even if very representative, of political parties, etc., which are set up to control the other organizations. But the activity of control is so huge and complex that it requires a bureaucratic structure of its own in a society which remains dichotomous, regardless how democratic its institutions.

Obviously, an important issue in relation to the transformation of everyday life is the family.[25] One of the main functions of the family in the contemporary alienated social relations is to socialize the new generation towards a smooth integration into society, i.e., to create a type of personality that is consistent with an alienated society. The situation in the East is very similar to that of the West concerning the creation of the type of personality that conforms, whether created by the family or not (schools, mass media, etc.). The family involves the most direct relationship between man and woman, a relationship which is as alienated as all other relations in society. Property is the main motive in the alienation between man and woman; the spouse is a means for prestige.[26] During the early period of the Soviet Republic, attempts were made to question this type of family, but under Stalinism it was recognized, more or less by instinct, that the authoritarian family structure provides

24. *Ibid.*, p. 1158.

25. Agnes Heller and Mihaly Vajda, "Family Structure and Communism," *Kortars*, Budapest, October 1970. English translation in *Telos*, no. 7, Spring, 1971, pp. 99-111.

26. A. Heller, "On the Future of the Relationship between the Sexes," *Kortars*, Budapest.

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an important basis for an authoritarian society. Therefore, the bourgeois type of family was re-established and consolidated. Later, "during the period of the establishment of other socialist countries," the transformation of the family was in no way part of the agenda.[27]

The transformation of everyday life is closely connected with the transformation of the family, and the relationship between men and women, in general. It is, however, possible that the transformation of the family (and of everyday life) starts prior to the radical transformation of society as a whole. It has become a reality for many young people who reject the life style of their parents which is oriented towards power, prestige, conformity, acquisition, etc.; similarly, they reject the "monogamous bourgeois family" and set up communes. This indicates a need for a new way of life.[28] Hungary's leading politicians condemn such manifestations of rebellion against tradition forms, and the young Hungarians who enjoy relatively more freedom than their counterparts in the other "Socialist" countries have great difficulties with the "establishment" concerning their experiments.

The alternative pushed (inconsistently) by those in power, i.e., the plan to collectivize or industrialize the education of children is not considered a solution by Agnes Heller and Mihaly Vajda. They suggest that it would further impoverish human relations. Neither this approach nor education at the bosom of the monogamous family moves towards "social control" or the free development of the individual. The commune, however, as successor to the bourgeois family would serve these purposes, not as an economic or political community, but as an "organizing center of everyday life." The commune rears the new generation to become democratic personalities, which will not willingly yield to every pressure and are not trained in absolute obedience, but are able to make critical and conscious choices. "The child of the commune will never consider it normal not to participate in decisions concerning his own life and he does not have the ambition to suppress others," a lesson only learned too soon in the authoritarian individualistic family. People become more free in their social relations and their decisions are less guided by routine. The child is not compelled to love specific individuals (e.g., the biological parents), but can seek out the persons he loves, and vice versa. As to sexual relations, it is up to the members of the commune to choose without prejudice and counter-prejudice (which is prejudice, too). For women, the commune seems to be the only alternative where many (but not all) legal inequalities have been abolished. But the commune still retains the division of labor based on sex, which is ultimately the crucial obstacle to equal opportunities. The elimination of this inequality is so closely related to the abolition of inequality in society in general, that any radical solution of one problem would depend on the radical solution of the other.

The social critique of the Hungarian New Left, though at an early stage, is already so rich in ideas that it is impossible to present all of them. We have therefore limited ourselves to outlining some of the most important and relevant topics. In the wasteland of the so-called Socialist countries of Eastern Europe, the only hope that Marxist theory and practice may be truly resurrected—after their perversion through the ironic history of dichotomous structures—is the emergence of a radical left critique.

27. A. Heller and M. Vajda, "Family Structure..." *op.cit.*, p. 1660.
28. A. Heller, "Theory and Practice from the Perspective of Human Needs," *Uj Iras*, Budapest, April 1972 (in Hungarian).

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*The Position Paper of the Cultural Political Work Collective Operating Next to the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party on the Anti-Marxist Views of Several Social Researchers**

I.

Almost four years have passed since the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party accepted those basic principles of the political attitude toward science that were also affirmed by the Xth Party Congress.

These principles seriously deal with the tasks of social scientific research and some of their ideological-political aspects. The Party emphasized that—in the interests of the scientific grounding of its politics—it wished to rely on the results of the social sciences that uncover the laws of our society. It requested and expected that the Marxist social scientists would cooperate in the grounding of political decisions, and therefore in providing the incentive of concrete tasks for research that would focus on answering new questions arising in the course of development. In harmony with this conception, the Central Committee stated in November 1972: "The social sciences must be encouraged to work out and answer the real, contemporary questions of our developing society."

The basic principles that the Central Committee of the Party has unambiguously affirmed as its scientific-political guidelines serve these goals. Thus, in the fisrt place, there is the principle that "the Party guarantees the freedom of creative research in the social sciences. There are no forbidden themes and prescribed conclusions." In harmony with the demand of enriching Marxism-Leninism and with the principle of research, the guidelines affirmed the freedom of scientific debates and pointed out that "the emergence of scientific schools standing on Marxist foundations, of new directions of research, the juxtaposition of different points of view, and a free scientific atmosphere of debate, all help the development of Marxism-Leninism."

At the same time the basic principles, in harmony with earlier documents of the Party, repeatedly and categorically rejected the pluralization of Marxism-Leninism: "The directions of research and the variety of schools become politically and ideologically dangerous when such intellectual-political tendencies question, dissolve, or reject the theoretical system of Marxism-Leninism... The ideological conception of a pluralist Marxism can lead to political pluralism, to the denial of the leading role of the Communist Party and ultimately of the working class." In strong relation to all this, the basic principles call attention to the increased socio-political responsibility of the Marxist social scientists: "Social researchers must always taken into account the fact that their experimental object is society, and that incorrect solutions can touch, and perhaps endanger, the whole of society... Freedom of research demands at the same time a high degree of political responsibility and consistent self-inspection."

Social scientists themselves have participated in the active working out of these

* All footnotes have been added by the editors.

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principles, which not only found wide understanding and response but also encouraged scientific research directed at the examination of contemporary questions. All this was expressed in those works attempting to explore those items that the Xth congress indicated as the most important.

The overwhelming majority of social scientists—understanding the contemporary tasks—lived up to this responsibly and creatively worked within the possibilities guaranteed by our socialist society. Motivated by an internal responsibility toward science and socialism, they keep in mind the unity of the freedom of research and debate on the one hand, and political responsibility and the responsibility of publication, on the other; the unity of the preservation of the principles of Marxism and of their creative application, the alliance and complimentarity of Marxist-Leninist politics and science which is an essential precondition of scientific development and of the success of social control.

All this had to be reiterated because, in the context of a generally positive development, in the social sciences there are some regressive manifestations. Some tendencies are perceivable which are foreign to our scientific life. A narrow circle of social scientists has recently published or wished to publish writings that, giving the appearance of Marxist analysis or even declaring the rightness of a pluralist Marxism, arbitrarily interpret both the basic concepts and positions of Marxism and some phenomena of our society. In the process, they attempt to revise the basic theoretical and political principles of Marxist-Leninist parties, including the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, and to outline a right revisionist ideological-political platform that borrows ideals from the non-socialist Western New Left. Such strivings were expressed in András Hegedüs' and Mária Márkus' paper "Modernization and the Alternatives of Social Development," delivered and distributed at the conference of an American foundation held in Warsaw, in Agnes Heller's lecture, "Theory and Practice from the Point of View of Human Needs," delivered in the United States and which has appeared in April 1972 in *Uj Iras*, and in Mihaly Vajda's article, "Marxism, Existentialism, Phenomenology," that has appeared in *Telos*, an American New Left journal.

We do not deal with these writings because of their scientific weight, or even because of their petit-bourgeois ideological tendency, but because of their unambiguous political direction. The cultural politics of our party takes account of the presence of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideologies in our scientific-cultural life. To the extent that there are positive values in works representing such ideologies—and in terms of partial results this is by no means impossible—we recognize them.[1] Whatever is debatable in them must be debated using the methods of public ideological struggle, discussion and persuasion. What is obviously false must, of course, be simply rejected. However, those tendencies of an ideological pluralism that are directed against the politics of the Party, the foundations of the international working class movement and of its ideology, Marxism-Leninism, require not only scientific and ideological, but also political judgment.

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1. The partial olive branch that is offered in this passage refers primarily to the works of the so-called "populist" ("*nepies*") writers—who may at this time have greater public support (especially among peasants and peasant intellectuals) than any other tendency in Hungarian letters.

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II.

The political conception expressed in the writings in question was formulated in the most unambiguous and understandable fashion by András Hegedüs and Mária Márkus when they took it upon themselves to evaluate the contemporary developmental tendencies in contemporary East-European Socialist countries. Some of these countries follow the so-called "model of state administration."[2] In this model, production takes place according to social needs expressed in plans and directives, but—so they say—these needs are determined by a "bureaucratic machinery" primarily according to the social and power interests of bureaucratic strata.

Another group of Eastern European Socialist countries, according to Hegedüs and Márkus, follow the "main road" that has already been travelled by advanced capitalist countries, and attempt to guarantee a greater dynamism of development by reproducing market relations.

In the characterization provided by Hegedüs and Márkus, it is completely unambiguous that Eastern European Socialist countries can be regarded as socialist only according to the "official ideology." In fact, they cannot claim a greater social dynamism, nor have they created more humane social relations than developed capitalist countries.

As far as dynamism goes, Hegedüs and Márkus claim that "the Marxist critique of capitalism in terms of its economic efficiency has, on the basis of the experiences of recent decades, generally lost its relevance." As for social relations, they claim that a completely closed hierarchical social structure based on the division of labor has emerged in Eastern European Socialist countries.

Completely disregarding history, they present the development of these countries as if the only perspective of contemporary development could and would be a standard of living and life style corresponding to the consumerist model of developed capitalist countries. Using the terminology of the bourgeois theory of "industrial society," Hegedüs and Márkus characterize the evolution of developed capitalist countries and Eastern European Socialist countries as a relationship of developed and less developed societies. Accordingly, they claim that in socialist countries no socialist society is being built: the center of the stage is now occupied by the task of modernizing.

Hegedüs and Márkus reject both the "model of state administration" [i.e., "statist administrative model"—editors' note] which does not guarantee necessary dynamism, and the "main road" which, even if it does not restore the private ownership of the means of production, essentially creates an acquisitive society oriented toward profit.

In opposition to such artificially created "models" they outline their "socialist" alternative. This latter "model" is supposedly able to reconcile economic efficiency with humanization. How this is to happen, they do not say. They do indicate that this model must guarantee choice among meaningful life styles, the individual development of men, their strivings for self-realization and self-expression, and the

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2. The English text presented at the Warsaw Conference (reprinted here) speaks about "statist administrative model" and not "model of state administration" [*allamigazgatasi modell*]. For the significance of the concept of "statism" cf., e.g., Svetozar Stojanovic's recent book, *Between Ideals and Reality* (Oxford, 1973).

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transition of power into the hands of some kind of undetermined communities representing real social power—communities able to supervise both market and state bureaucracy. All this, however, remains on the level of foggy and utopian generalities.

Hegedüs and Márkus warn that no one should believe that their model can now be worked out in East European Socialist Countries. First, a "serious structural transformation" of socialist societies is necessary. Measuring their possible "mass basis," they count on the masses turning away from the two "models" of socialism as they characterize them. And they conclude their argument in the following manner: "The second question which cannot be neglected is whether the existing power structure permits movements seeking self-realization and self-expression. The answer here is not unconditionally negative. It depends in a large measure on concrete power relations in the individual countries and internationally. A development of the bureaucracy in a pluralistic direction, which is helped by different economic reforms, can also become important. Thus, certain particular interests can emerge, on the basis of which some forces in power may support the motions we have indicated, even if only in the interest of maintaining certain appearances." [This passage does not appear in the English text presented at the Warsaw conference. Perhaps it was included in a Hungarian version of the article.—Editors' note]

In the final analysis, like the enemies of socialism, they attach their hopes to "developmental" tendencies of socialism: the decrease of the mass influence of the Communist parties of socialist countries, the turning away of the masses from the programs of development accepted in these countries, the emergence and reification of internal oppositions within socialist society, the development of the "bureaucracy" in a pluralist direction, and such developments of international power relations that favor the emergence and utilization of internal oppositions.

Clearly, those hopes and this kind of political speculation have nothing to do with socialism, or even social science.

Agnes Heller, in the cited article, ultimately denies the essentially revolutionary character of the socialist revolutions, and the leading role of the working class in the revolutions of our age. Leaving out of account the Marxist-Leninist theory of social revolution and the class bases of revolution, Heller calls them "political revolutions" and washes away the distinctions among all movements that aim at the revolutionary transformation of society by taking political power. (The classical type of these revolutions, according to Heller, is French Jacobinism). At the same time she distinguishes "total social revolutions" from so-called political revolutions, and claims that up until now history has known no such "total social revolutions." That is, the great October Socialist Revolution and the world-historically important revolutions of our century were not "total social revolutions," but "political revolutions" which—to the extent they were revolutions at all—brought about a change only in political power and did not lead to the revolutionary transformation of total society: to the revolution of life-style.[3]

3. Heller's distinction closely following Marx's *Zur Judenfrage*, is hardly as schematic as suggested here. (1) She recognizes political revolution as a necessary moment of total social revolution ("human emancipation"); (2) she does not claim that political revolutions have no social consequences—only that they cannot abolish the political alienation (except perhaps in

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Socialist revolutions—in Heller's terminology: "political revolution"—cannot bring about the radical transformation of capitalism because they base their programs on the needs of the working class formed under capitalism. The satisfaction of these needs does not point beyond capitalism, while revolution in the Marxian sense, she continues, presupposes the overcoming of the whole bourgeois structure of needs: the formation of needs that cannot in principle be satisfied within the framework of capitalism. Heller calls these "radical needs," and claims that according to historical experience—contrary to Marx's expectations—such needs did not emerge within the working class. Thus, if we want to remain faithful to the Marxian program—she says—"we must break new paths."

For Heller, "breaking new paths" means to unambiguously turn away from the revolutionary workers' movement and from the program of socialist construction in socialist countries, in favor of an orientation toward the ultra-radical youth and student movements of developed capitalist countries. By considering out of context a few crisis phenomena of developed capitalist countries, Heller reaches some historically untenable and anti-Marxist consequences: "When large groups of young people (and the best among them) abandon the prestige and value system of their predecessors based on refrigerators and cars, when masses of students (again the best) leave the universities because of similar reasons, when a new family structure, in the form of communes, is gaining ground, all these indicate a transformation of the existing structure of needs."

All this means that in socialist countries the Marxian concept of revolution is not being realized. "Radical needs" aiming at the transformation of the structure of needs do not emerge within the working class or in the workers' movement. They do emerge, however, in hippies' communes of advanced capitalist countries, who take on only limited—and often very doubtful—roles in social struggles, and who, by withdrawing from society, attempt to realize their naive imaginations on islands outside of society. Instead of the revolutionary program of the workers' movement, instead of the revolution of the working class, Agnes Heller's "New Left revolutionary" program[4] involves the "revolution" of the counter-cultural movement and of communes.

Mihaly Vajda's article deals with the philosophical foundations of Marxism, and works out a "consistent," pluralist conception. According to it there is no

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the revolutionary struggle itself) between citizen and bourgeois, between educator and educated, vangard and mass; (3) although the claim that Heller assigns the Bolshevik revolution under the category of political revolution, it is also clear that she believes that (unlike the Jacobin revolution in the French revolution) the Bolshevik revolution made a total social revolution objectively possible, and only ultimately did it amount to merely political revolution. (4) There is no suggestion in Heller that the revolution of the way of life can be successful anywhere without the destruction of the political power of the established ruling strata.

4. Heller's article by no means presents youth or students or "hippies" as a new revolutionary subject. She intends to convey one important insight that she in fact learned from the New Left, namely that radical needs emerge in any social group only when the problem of self-transformation is confronted on a group level and not as a spontaneous and necessary development of capitalism. Her analysis does not, in our opinion, exclude the possibility of the emergence of radical needs in socially and economically significant strata (e.g. and especially the working class)—although she certainly implies that any vangard, elitist conception of organization can structurally respond only to the quantitative or alienated needs of its "mass basis."

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"authentic Marxism," but many different interpretations of Marxism, i.e., many kinds of Marxism are possible. This conception is not only aimed at Marxism, but against science in general. According to Vajda, there is no objective truth: truth is a "practical question" and not the uncovering or mirroring of the relationships of objective reality. According to Vajda, utterly contradictory social theories can be equally true if they correspond to the practice of some society or of some social force. Thus, speaking of bourgeois and Marxist theories, Vajda writes: "Each of these types of consciousness treats the other as false. Which one will succeed and become historical truth is not a function of which of the two correctly reflects existing social conditions. Only the struggle between two forces can decide between the two truths. This is the essence of the claim that truth is a matter of practice." [*Telos*, number 7, Spring 1971, p. 19].

After such a rejection of the precondition of science, i.e., that only one truth is possible in a given context, it is not surprising that Vajda claims that "human conduct, and therefore the course of history, has no laws." Consistent with his denial of the realization of necessity in the course of history, Vajda denies the necessity of the emergence of socialist society, and places the latter in the realm of possibilities. Along with Hegedüs, Márkus and Heller, this questions the socialist character of the socialism that has been, and is being, realized.

III.

The common dimension of the anti-Marxist ideological-political platform that emerges from the above writings, the unity of their conception beyond immediate points of contact, is obvious. It is obvious, e.g., that Vajda's pluralist conception of Marxism immediately supports the political pluralization of socialism that is presupposed and preferred by Hegedus and Markus.

The essence of this platform is a stance against every practically realized form of socialism in the name of a "Marxism" trivialized into petit-bourgeois—humanist—phrases, against Marxism and the workers' movement in the name of a "socialist alternative" (distinguished from actual socialism). At the same time this platform implies the theoretical renunciation of the world-historically important and completed socialist revolution; the explaining away of the leading forces of the revolutionary process of our age; the denial of the revolutionary role of the socialist countries and of the international workers' movement; the denigration of the development of Eastern European Socialist countries—including the politics of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (and especially of the development resulting from the introduction of the new system of the direction in the economy); and the outlining of a political orientation and program that departs from the strategic direction of the international workers' movement and breaks with all the known practical roads and theories of the construction of socialism.[5]

5. The above paragraph represents a *melange* of isolated propositions drawn from various unpublished works of the authors in question. None of them holds the position that is presented here; unfortunately since the works in question have never appeared in any language the straw man is fortified by administrative power. Nevertheless, we should not that there is by no means complete agreement among the theoreticians mentioned on several of the issues raised in this paragraph, and the whole of the article. There are important disagreements on questions of epistemology, of economic and social theory, etc. Of course the Budapest school

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This program is aimed at the revision of basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. Its leading motives are foggy and general humanistic phrases, petit-bourgeois utopias about communities that will transform the structure of needs and guarantee the self-realization of the free self-expression of individuals. Such communities will allegedly be able to control both the state bureaucracy and the market. We are supposed to see the prototype of these communities in the counter-cultural and communal movements of the industrially most developed capitalist countries. Those who know the basics of scientific socialism and the teachings of its classics relating to socialism, also know that to reduce the Marxian socialist program to humanist phrases and to the politically doubtful movement of some kind of imagined (in any case contrary to the really existing forces of socialism, to the revolutionary movement of the working class) communities is nothing other than a new variety of revisionist backsliding in relation to the concept of socialism.

Ever since society has been divided into classes with antagonistic interests, history has posed (and still poses) its great questions from the class viewpoint. Accordingly, the basic battle-lines of the contemporary world contrapose capitalism to socialism, imperialist bourgeois to the working class. Those who do not recognize this fundamental fact and isolate themselves from the revolutionary forces determining the development of the contemporary world by seeking some kind of third road, they are embarking on a project that has already been condemned to failure by history. Independently of their subjective intentions, sooner or later they will become instruments of the forces of imperialism.

We must call attention to all this because some of these authors' writings and that of a few other similar philosophers (György Bence, Janos Kis and György Márkus) which were not published because of the publishers' responsible and justified decisions go even further in the exposition of the above conception, and consequently in their break with Marxism. We do not wish to discuss their "merits." We refer to them only as documents of the further "deepening" in an anti-Marxist direction of the already analyzed views that were expressed in published writings. In these writings the authors do not merely explain away the revolutionary role of the working class, but even deny the existence (understood also historically, retroactively) of a working class that has a unified interest in the destruction of the capitalist system. Thus, they claim that every force acting in the name of the working class does so with false consciousness. Not only do they exclude Leninism from the theoretical heritage of the revolutionary working class movement but, juxtaposing Marx the philosopher to Marx the economist, they reject the whole of Marx's *Capital* as mistaken in many of its basic presuppositions. They bracket all history, the past of socialism and Marxism, the revolutionary workers' movement and its experiences; while they characterize the Marxian conception of socialism and communism as unrealizable and they openly claim the "bankruptcy" of all the major historically known tendencies of the international workers' movement.

Not only are the political aims of these "local" versions of petit bourgeois revisionism doubtful, but the locus of their ideological sources is also confused: they lack originality. Hence, the eclectic charcter of their theories. In those studies the

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founded by György Lukács is united in its critical interest (based on fundamental value and anthropolitical premises) to continue the Marxian project that cannot be continued without the self-critique of Marxism.

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remnants of Marxist phraseology mix with bourgeois sociological concepts foreign to the Marxist method and lacking concrete historical analysis. Here we find New Left theoretical cliches denying the revolutionary role of the working class, the spontaneity cult of classical revisionism,[6] as well as fashionable bourgeois convergence theories. And this kind of "ideological peaceful coexistence" is not accidental: today's "third road" revisionism of the pseudo-left is a typical kind of convergence theory. It is a kind of reverse convergence theory which, by essentially identifying socialism and capitalism, rejects both as equally bad.

The identification of capitalism and socialism and the "theoretical renunciation" of the socialist revolutions has nothing to do with the actual historical processes, and at most proves only that its spokesmen—willy-nilly—take the same viewpoint as bourgeois theories directed against socialism and the revolutionary workers' movement. The same intellectual arsenal is the source of that "theory of bureaucracy," attempting to demonstrate that in today's socialist societies the "bureaucracy" has taken over and fulfills the function of a ruling class. The case is similar for the theory of supposed "models" of socialism. They seek to inflate the practical roads and solutions of society-construction in Eastern European Socialist countries that have emerged under different socio-historical conditions and national characteristics, into differences of theoretical validity, and even oppositions.

These writings conceal a political conception of petit bourgeois socialism. Such "theoretical" efforts are foreign to Marxism and science—even if they appear in a scientific dress and with Marxist phraseology. It is hardly necessary to show that the denial of objective truth, the supposition of more than one truth in the context of a given question, the denial of lawfullness in history, are unscientific and even essentially anti-scientific positions. The methodologies of the studies in question are quite far from the criteria of scientific analysis, and the scientific demands of Marxism. The choice of the conceptual apparatus, the use of concepts such as "modernization" or Heller's schematic classification of revolutions independently of any social determinations and social basis, presuppose what they seek to prove: instead of socialist transformation in East European socialist countries, what is taking place is some kind of "modernization," i.e., the socialist revolutions are in point of fact not revolutions.

In more than one case they seek to give credence to their harmful and destructive positions by appropriating questions that the party has raised long ago, e.g., the struggle against bureaucratic phenomena, socialist democracy, socialist life-style and a complete, meaningful human life. They act as if these problems were posed initially by them, as if they were their achievement. They attempt to use even the correct posing of questions that they appropriated to prove their claims and assertions.[7]

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6. This is a revealing error, of course, because classical revisionism (Bernstein's "reformism"; Auer's "practicism," the whole trade union wing of the SPD) was organization minded and, on the contrary, Luxemburg's mass strike conception that was characterized as a cult of spontaneity under Stalinism (for obvious reasons) was first directed against them in particular.

7. Let us note that all these issues were first raised, all over Eastern Europe, by Marxists desperately opposed to all forms of Stalinism and neo-Stalinism. Thus in Hungary even the official ideology could not completely neglect the demands and criticism of Lukács and his group—demands and criticisms that had their parallels also in the creative arts. If proof were

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However, they approach even the real problems in an ahistorical way. In the social sciences, the bypassing of history is always the mask of an unscientific approach. One cannot give a scientifically credible answer to ahistorical questions that are badly posed, that are not the real problems of socialism but of the acritical application to our conditions of fashionable western, bourgeois or New Left theories. From this point of view, the writings in questions convincingly show the break with Marxism also meant an intellectual-scientific decline.

These authors did not become revisionists overnight. The party had already been forced to deal with their views, or with problems that relate to their political actions. It gave them adequate time and opportunities to debate their views, to revise them self-critically. It gave them a chance to put to good use the opportunity to carry out research that our socialist society had given them. There were attempts on the part of Marxist social scientists to reject in open debates, e.g., the earlier views of András Hegedüs, or the philosophical attempts proclaiming the pluralization of Marxism. However, the authors of the writings in question avoided substantive debates. They also violated state discipline, and in many cases they published or attempted to publish their writing: by avoiding debates in their workplace and by bypassing responsible leaders of their research institutes.

They developed their separate positions that later became a separate political stance and an opposition. Thus, they repeatedly transgressed the boundary of our ideological public life laid out long ago by our principles of cultural policy. These principles—which are both the guarantee and the encouragement of freedom of research and debate, of the formation of scientific schools and their competition—have not changed at all. The views of the authors in question, that were debated earlier, have changed. Only recently they have taken a unified political character.

The transformation of the relationship of the authors in question to György Lukács is also instructive. As long as Lukács lived, scientific public opinion considered many of them his students.[8] However, Lukács' views that sharply reject attempts of the pluralization of Marxism are just as well known as the fact that he considered the working class movement, of which he was a militant since 1918, "the very home of Marxism"—to use an expression from his last work. "The foundation of neopositivist intellectual manipulation can be pluralist," he wrote. "Marxism, however, knows for every question only one correct answer that corresponds to objective reality." Lukács also left no doubt that "the doubting of the objectively socialist character of existing socialism belongs to the circle of bourgeois misunderstanding and calumny."

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needed on this point, cf. Agnes Heller's lectures from 1957, published (1970) under the title *From Intention to Consequence*; Lukács' *Der Junge Marx* (1955) and György Márkus' 1966 essay *Marxism and 'Anthropology'*. The 1956 debates in the Petofi circle, the subsequent attacks on Lukács (1957-1960) also demonstrate that the sides on the issues in question have been drawn long ago. However, until the invasion of Czechoslovakia the contribution of Marxist humanism (and specifically of the Lukács circle) was sporadically recognized by the Kadar-Aczel leadership.

8. Of course there was more than adequate ground for this "opinion" of "scientific public opinion." Agnes Heller, for example, had been Lukács' friend and assistant since the mid-1950s. Heller, Vajda, Márkus, and Ferenc Feher have been the editors and co-editors of almost all of Lukács' works that were published in Hungarian in the 1960s and 1970s. Lukács did not hide his high opinion of his students.

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The conception that emerges from the writings in question is in opposition on all important points to the basic theoretical and political striving of Lukács' Marxist lifework. And this is not an accident. These authors' break with Marxism is also a break with Lukács. We must call attention to all this because, while we consider many parts of Lukács' lifework debatable and to be debated, we hold his lifework as a whole to be an outstanding Marxist achievement, and it is our conviction that only the serious study and critical analysis of his lifework can lead to a purer recognition of his values, and only this can prevent their illegitimate appropriation and falsification.

IV.

The November 1972 position of the Central Committee on the execution of the decisions of the Xth Congress repeatedly exhorted Marxist social scientists "in addition to uncovering reality, they should in a greater measure carry out their task of forming consciousness and educating men in the battle against incorrect views." Furthermore, the Central Committee emphasized that "we must strive to overcome anti-Marxist views by creatively using Marxism-Leninism, and by clearly elaborating our position with the convincing proof of our truth."

In the same November session, the Central Committee has also expressed that Communists can contribute to the solution of their tasks in all areas, thus in the area of cultural-scientific life, by a more responsible and consistent carrying out of the practically tested principles and decisions of the party. A few points of this position require special attention in relation to the appearance of the anti-Marxist views we have mentioned.

The first of these emphasizes the increased political-ideological responsibility of the workshops of scientific cultural life, the publishing houses and editorial boards, and points out with reference to the assertions of the scientific political principles that relate to the interconnection and mutual presupposition of the freedom of research and the responsibility of publication: "We must consistently adhere to the principle that views hostile to socialism, endangering the interests of our people, should not be made public."

Naturally, the responsibility of publishers and editors does not and cannot relieve Marxist social scientists and our scientific public from acting against non-Marxist views. On the contrary: healthy Marxist spirit and atmosphere of debate must help, must complement the work of cultural workshops and editorial boards. Not only is it incorrect that occasionally non-Marxist or even anti-Marxist views concerning essential social issues get published, but it is equally incorrect when these views are not answered by the representatives of the Marxist viewpoint. The unity of research and of the ideological functions of the social sciences demands the consistent debating of the nature of Marxism-Leninism. The November position of the Central Committee in this context separately called attention to the fact that "the spirit of debate turning against non-Marxist views must be increasingly encouraged: it must be made clear that debate is an instrument of Marxist ideology, that it is the unavoidable duty of Marxist ideologists."

The question of international scientific relations of the social sciences must also be handled with more responsibility. There must be a consistent application of the scientific political principles that dictate special attention be paid to scientific

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relations that help the propagation of Marxist scientific results in countries of different social systems. We must warn of this because the tacticians of "detente" seek to exercise a characteristic "counter-selection" in the area of these ties. Using various forms of prestige-creating means that serve their interests, they seek to reinforce all attempts directed against the unity of our socialist society and of socialist countries—or at least are usable for these purposes.

V.

The scientific-political principles of the party have unambiguously expressed their faith that "the indispensible precondition of the pursuit of science is the correctly interpreted freedom of science. From an ideological viewpoint, it is in the interests of our people involved in constructing socialism to research and analyze all scientific problems connected with our social practice and our social development." At the same time, these principles affirmed that "the scientist has duties toward his people and his country. The Hungarian people who are building socialism justly expect from social scientists an obligation toward socialism and toward social progress. We seek to spread the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism among those who cultivate science. The scientist must recognize social needs, and he must take into account the possibilities of the country when choosing research tasks. The organs of the party support first of all work of research that correctly recognizes and attaches itself to the needs of society."

The misuse of the freedom of research is not typical of our public scientific life and of the great majority of social scientists who are obligated to ideals of our socialist society and of Marxism-Leninism. Nevertheless, even a few occasional attempts in this direction can endanger the good political atmosphere of public scientific life. Especially because they can enforce unproductive debates which do not help either the realization of the tasks of the social sciences, or of our society, they can shake confidence in those occupied with the social sciences and can endanger the increasing social esteem of the social sciences and those who cultivate them.

These attempts can also endanger those well-intentioned young people, who seek social action directed toward the ideals of socialism, but because of their lack of adequate intellectual armor, solidity, life experiences, and of adequate revolutionary practice, may be, for a time, easily deceivable through alluring, pseudo-theoretical, pseudo-revolutionary phrases and a-scientific manipulations.[9]

The consistent execution and realization of the scientific-political principles of the party is still the most important guarantee of the further development of the social sciences in a correct direction, and this is the way for the most effective contribution of Marxist social scientists toward the solution of the tasks of our socialist society. For this reason we once again call attention to the fact that the social sciences can contribute most successfully first of all through the scientific analysis of the practice and the historical experience of our building of socialism, and through the generalization of these experiences to the enrichment of Marxist-Leninist theory, to the

9. After losing their research jobs, the authors in question were informed in May 1973 that they will not be able to publish their writings that express their anti-Marxist views. The next two paragraphs are also important from this respect, as any careful reader will notice.

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solidification and extension of the achieved position of Marxism-Leninism in our public thinking, to the solution of the theoretical issues that are most burning from the viewpoint of the construction of socialism on a higher level.

The party counts on the obligation and the responsible work of Marxist social scientists and is convinced that truly responsible and obligated social scientific work of research, coupled with really scientific exactness and methods—whatever its leading questions—can only deepen and tighten, under the conditions of socialism, the mutual reliance and alliance of science and politics.

*Modernization and the Alternatives of Social Progress**

by András Hegedüs and Mária Márkus

In recent years, most East European countries have reached a level of economic development, marked primarily by an end to the extensive possibilities for the growth of production. Now, the dynamism of these societies depends on the speed and the means by which the transition to intensive development takes place. Far-reaching changes are simultaneously taking shape in consumption: mass poverty ceases to determine social conditions, and differentiated needs are beginning to spread widely, a circumstance brought about not only by the internal evolution of the countries in questiopn, but also by the influence of the civilizatory model of the more developed industrial countries.[1] This situation not only creates the possibility of several alternatives of further development, but on the individual and on the social level (and, hence, a choice of ways of life), but makes it necessary. Many people identify these problems with the question of modernization in the broad sense of the word.[2] However, in our view, modernization may take place in different

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1. This does not mean, of course, that there do not exist even in the wealthiest of these countries, relatively numerous strata that cannot satisfy their fundamental needs to an extent corresponding to the norms of respectable human life accepted in the societies in question. This, however, is partially connected with the dynamic effect of differentiated needs, a question to which we shall come back later.

2. Several definitions of modernization are in use, but, by and large, everybody agrees that sociologists are interested primarily in two of its aspects: structural changes and the adaptive capacity of the social-cultural system. S.N. Eisenstadt, W.H. Friedland wrote that, among the structural characteristics, problems primarily having sociological relevance include economic specialization, urbanization, the breakdown of ascriptive criteria, the opening of mobility, particularly through widespread formal education, the development of a highly differentiated political structure, the extension of politics to all walks of life, the weakening of the political controls of the traditional elites, the spread of political participation, the differentiation of cultural and value systems, and the growth of a widespread communications network. See Friedland, "A Social Approach to Modernizations." The second aspect mainly concerns the capacity of the systems for changes that go beyond their institutional premises. Cf. *Modernization by Design* (Cornell University Press, 1969).

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societies in essentially different ways—its very process necessarily takes different forms, depending on the developmental alternative chosen.

At least two principal trends can be observed in East Enropean countries regarding ideas about the future and the alternatives of progress. First, a statist (statism) model exerts a strong influence, mainly through official channels. This model projects into the future the already existing structure of management, organization and life. Thus, by its very nature, this model does not provide an adequate answer to present problems. This model is not only traditionally bound to the solutions developed during conditions of extensive growth and of a general shortage of goods, but represents these solutions as ideologically indispensable corollaries of a socialist society. Although this path does not necessarily require the unchanged reproduction of the existing social order (it is able and sometimes forced to adapt itself to certain theoretical and practical changes more or less successfully), it does not lead to the development of a really dynamic new model either. Modernization, even interpreted in the narrowest sense, presupposes that a system should not only change continuously, but that it should be able to carry out changes that go beyond its institutional limits.

Consequently, the suitability of this model for the future was subject to heavy criticism in the last decade. It was first criticized in those countries in which the replacement of extensive development by intensive development became a practical question. These societies were thereby forced to seek a life that would take the spreading of differentiated needs into account. This partly constituted the basis on which various attempts at reforms were made in the countries in question. However, in most cases, in the last resort due to the concrete relations of forces, these reforms did not go beyond attempts to modernize old solutions.

The second major trend regarding ideas about the future is embodied in "the main road" approach. The adherents of this model increasingly give voice directly or indirectly to the idea that the East European countries must, in essence, proceed along the main road, meaning the path or the wider band covered by the advanced Western countries. Thus, the exponents of this view are of the opinion that the given level of economic development strictly determines not only the fundamental structure of production and consumption, but also the forms of social control and organization. In their view, the countries in question will be able to solve the newly arising problems of modernizing themselves only in this way.

The means of controlling the economy, and, especially, the appreciation of the role of market relations in the spheres of production and consumption, have become the focal point in the debate about further social progress. This debate has been sharpened by the fact that a self-analysis of the East European societies has manifested a number of negative consequences of eliminating market conditions. On the other hand, not only did the classical model reject market relations most definitely, but, in the West, an acute theoretical and practical, primarily humanistic, critique was developed against the contemporary forms of domination by market relations (the various forms of opting out of society, the commune movement, hippyism, etc.). This induced not only the enemies of a market economy, but its unequivocal adherents as well, to think over this critique, or at least to react to it.

The adherents of the first statist administrative model, even when they recognize the negative effect of the elimination of market relations on dynamism, hold that this negative effect may be avoided by making use of the various, sometimes very

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spectacular, achievements of modern science (e.g., cybernetics, the application of econometry in planning, etc.). However, the use of scientific innovations does not change the essence of the old method—the system of plan precepts that is implied by this model.

On the ideological plane, it is still being declared that in the socialist societies production and services do not take place for the sake of marketing the product or, more generally, for maximizing profits, but aim at the immediate satisfaction of social needs as expressed in plan precepts. At the same time, the sociological fact, passed over in silence, is that "needs" are determined by bureaucratic machinery, often contrary to declared values and in accordance with various power and stratum interests.

In opposition to these views, the adherents of the main road approach set out primarily from the view that the system of plan precepts almost inevitably reproduces the uneconomical production structure, and thus interdicts the evolvement of dynamism. To attain dynamism, they hold the widespread assertion that market relations should be mandatory. They do not consider this contrary to a planned economy, since it can be realized not only by the method of plan precepts, but also by methods of indirect control. They consider profit interests evolving within the framework of market relations to be the principal motivating force behind production and, hence, the only road to the development of dynamism. Consequently, they believe that the development and satisfaction of man's acquisitiveness is the most important motivation of economic behavior. They consider the development of market relations the only possible way to achieve the decentralization and, to a certain extent, the democratization of the administrative power of the state in the control of production. In their view this must be achieved to broaden the freedom of choice in personal consumption, thereby increasing its effect on production.

Moreover, the representatives of the main road approach entertain the hope that the developmental alternative recommended by them will not only ensure a better satisfaction of needs, but will also increase the number of social options. The attraction of the main road view is enhanced by the fact that the Marxist critique of capitalism from the aspect of its economic efficiency has, on the basis of the experiences of recent decades, lost its relevance to a great extent. While essentially maintaining the bourgeois private ownership of the means of production—even though in notably changed form as with extensive state intervention, the Western countries have succeeded in achieving a relatively more even and faster growth rate in comparison with the past. Especially in the last one or two decades, the market relations of production have not proved to be a brake on the forces of production. At the beginning of the sixties it was still often assumed in the East European countries that the economic growth rate of their societies was essentially faster and that their lag in development could be terminated within a relatively short time. But, on the basis of the concrete statistical analyses of the dynamism achieved in different countries in the last decade, these ideas have turned out to be erroneous.[3]

3. A number of studies of various specific areas have been published in Hungary in the last year. Erno A. Toth, for instance, demonstrated in his essay entitled "Changes in the Ratio of Live Labour Utilization in Agriculture," *Kozgazdasagi Szemle*, No. 10 (1971) that the number of population per one agricultural earner increased faster (in comparison with the 1930s) in the

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In our search for the path of further progress, let us assume, hypothetically, for the time being, that the social alternatives are not exhausted by the two solutions described above, but that there also exists a possibility that promises a more dynamic development than the statist model and more humanistic social progress than that which would ensue from following the main road approach. Before attempting to draw a sketch of this possibility, let us first have a look at the main problems in the domain of production and consumption.

Technology, Organization of Work, and Division of Labor

The adoption of the techniques, technology, and organizational forms brought about in the developed countries plays a very important role in the economic growth of countries of medium development, to whch the East European socialist countries belong. However, this process of modernization and the replacement of extensive development by intensive development has limitations, which cause a deviation from the main road. This deviation, however, does not constitute a *different* road chosen

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West European countries than in the East European countries (1.22 percent annually in Hungary, but 2.11 percent in Austria and 3.85 percent in the Federal Republic of Germany). According to the data used by Toth, the industrialization and chemicalization of agriculture has also progressed at a slower rate in Eastern Europe. Whereas the average annual growth of the utilization of fertilizers per hectare was 3.60 kgs. in Hungary in the last fifteen years, it was 9.52 in Austria and 9.46 in the FRG; or, from 1948-1952, the annual increase in the number of tractors per 100 hectares of agricultural area has been 0.063 in Hungary, 0.700 in Austria and 0.806 in the FRG.

The analysis and international comparison of the actual dynamism of industry is more difficult because the use of "in kind" indices is more complicated here, and because the difference in the formulation of producers' prices in different countries makes the comparison of "monetary" indices almost impossible. In addition, in the evaluation of data, it also must be noted that the primary objective of investments centered on production (neglecting the infrastructure) is the acceleration of the growth rate of industry. According to the data published by Istvan Hetenyi, "In the socialist countries the share of productive investments is 55 to 75 percent, while in the capitalist countries observed, it is 28 to 45 percent."

See Hetenyi: *Topical Questions of the Development of our Economy* (Budapest: Kozgazdasagi es Jogi Kiado [Economic and legal publishing house], 1971), p. 16. Taking these factors into account, we must not overestimate the fact that the index figure of industrial production is higher in Hungary than in the countries included in the previous comparison (using the 1960 figures as a base, the volume of industrial production in 1968 was 177 in Hungary, 141 in Austria, and 147 in the FRG).

In a study by Mrs. Erno Toth, the development of housing and communal utilities in Hungary is compared to those in a number of other countries. Although the period under investigation is relatively short, the results are nevertheless characteristic of the general trend. Whereas the number of dwelling rooms per 100 inhabitants increased from 66.5 in 1960 to 70.7 in 1966 in Hungary, the same increase in the same period was from 104.9 to 113.7 in Austria and from 98.3 to 110.1 in the Federal Republic of Germany. The difference in the growth rate is even larger, at Hungary's expense, if we compare not the number of rooms, but the dwelling area in square or cubic meters. (See Mrs. Toth, "The International Comparison of Housing and of Public Utilities," *Kozgazdasagi Szemle*, No. 11 [1971].) A similar conclusion was arrived at by Attila Csernok, Eva Ehrlich, and Gyorgy Szilagyi, who investigated the dynamism of the development of the infrastructure, including housing construction. On the basis of the method developed by them, they established the order of the various countries and their change in time. According to this scale, Hungary slipped back from twenty-second place occupied between 1950 and 1955 (which, according to the authors, already represented a considerable deterioration compared to the situation between 1925 and 1930) to twenty-fifth place by 1965-1968. See Csernok, Ehrlich, and Szilagyi, "The Planning of the Infrastructure," *Tarsadalmi Szemle*, No. 11 (1971).

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consciously on the basis of accepted values, but is simply a *shortfall* or *lag*. The low degree of the readiness and capacity of the different societies to utilize for their own purpose the technologies developed in other countries must be considered a first obstacle. The evolvement of the process of adaptation, so understood, has political and ideological as well as cultural conditions. The "openness" of the various countries is especially pertinent. After the victory of the October Revolution, this openness appeared as an almost obvious requirement; Lenin still emphasized that, in this respect, one had to learn from those countries that were economically and technically advanced. But, later, various circumstances (intervention, economic blockade, etc.) made the realization of openness to new technical achievements and methods of production difficult. Still later, the most varied scientific and technical achievements (e.g., cybernetics, genetics, etc.) were evaluated exclusively on an ideological basis, which impeded their rational utilization.

The seclusion that has been brought about in this way distorted the scientific life and the structure of technical developmental activity in the countries in question; instead of adapting the scientific and technical achievements of the more developed countries, the striving for new results at any price became dominant. This principle of autarchy was felt in the most varied of economic dealings. For example, the purchase of patents and know-how in this field dropped to a minimum in most countries. Of course, the effects of this seclusion and the striving for autarchy was also extended to trade relations. For this reason, even when research and technical development brought significant results in some areas, they could not be introduced optimally in production becaue the necessary components, machinery, etc., could not be imported. Although this situation has been mitigated, the adaptation of the achievements of science and technology is still made difficult by the relatively low level of technical education, by insufficient work involvement, and by inadequate organization of management. This is connected with the fact that in these countries the majority of industrial workers have come directly from agriculture, or are first-generation industrial workers. This does not only raise the special problems of adaptation, which Hungarian sociologists investigate in much detail today, but also results in the easily proven fact that this stratum brings their system of work values from their rural background, which influences their behavior in modern industrial work organizations. The extension of market relations promises a positive change in this regard: on the one hand, the evolvement of competition between producers can no longer be based on the seclusion of individual states or groups of states. Thus, many elements of seclusion still existing today must be eliminated. On the other hand, the extension of contacts also necessarily increases the efficiency of endeavours aiming at the development of the culture of work, since it makes the conflict of the different types of work permanent. However, the guiding principle of the market is economic efficiency, and thus new techniques must be evaluated solely from this point of view (i.e., from the standpoint of whether or not they are economical).

We must correct this one-sidedness from two aspects. First, the countries of medium development, if they want to accelerate their economic progress, must introduce in certain areas of key importance such technological innovations that are not economical at the time but do technologically revolutionize entire areas. Second, these countries must create, in technical development and in the modernization of the organization of work, a hierarchy of importance based on humanistic values.

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This is different from that dictated by market requirements in a laissez-faire system.

The criticism of the laissez-faire interpretation primarily arises from the various sciences and trends centered on man, but may also come from various social movements, which bring into question the way of life induced by some technical or scientific achievements, or the structural effects caused by the latter. This last concern is very worthy of attention even though it is pushed into the background by the attraction of material things; and even though the way of life that has given rise to the movements mentioned, has not yet touched the masses directly. As a consequence, the wealth and the higher standard of living accompanying the main road views is still much more concrete and attractive to them.

The stand taken by the countries and societies in question towards this theoretical and practical critique, is a very important factor in the actual choice of the alternatives of social progress. Today it is still rather characteristic of the official viewpoint that although in principle it recognizes the justness of this critique or at least of some of its elements, it usually restricts its validity to those societies in which private property relations continue to play a decisive role in the economy. Departing from this assumption, it interprets all phenomena, even those very similar to each other, according to the socio-economic formation in which they occur; in one case, they are taken as a natural corollary of the system, and in another, a chance occurrence or a leftover from the past. At the same time, the internal social criticism of the techniques connected with the main road view has not been able to develop either, partly because of the already indicated lack of openness, and partly because the experiments directed toward the creation of a new way of life are very restrained. Consequently, in the countries in question, the demand for "humane techniques and technologies" or for organizational methods of work corresponding to these are quite naturally relegated to the background by the demand for a rapid increase of goods and services, also an official goal supported by the masses.

The adoption of the main road view in the development of techniques and the organization of work determines to a very large extent the social structure as far as it is based on the technical division of labor and the changes taking place within that structure. At the beginning of the sixties, the developing sociology of the European socialist countries began to analyse the structure of these new socioeconomic formations. These analyses proved through the most varied empirical examinations that a new and apparently very stable social structure had arisen in which the principal factor determining social stratification was no longer the difference in property relations among the groups and individuals, but the position occupied by them in the technical division of labor. However, it also should be noted that the role of the division of labor in the formation of the social structure has increased not only in the East European countries, but also in the West. This gives rise to the idea that modern economic and technical progress unequivocally creates a structure built on the division of labor.

Although technical progress indeed creates various types of work, it is the whole social system that actually directly determines how people are bound to these concrete types of work and what hierarchy will be created among the strata emerging from the distribution of income and prestige and from the ability to make power decisions and to enforce their social control.

This also means that, though the abolition of the bourgeois private ownership of the means of production cannot essentially change the technically given types of

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work, it can, in principle, open up a new way of development characterized by an essentially different way of life for the individual than the one dominant in capitalist societies. Fundamentally, from the aspect of socialist values, the negative consequences of the division of labor can be cancelled out in two different ways.

1. In economic development, in economic policy, and in the development of the organization of work, preference may be given—in accordance with the requirement of the "humane techniques, technologies, and organization of work"—to changes that foster the elimination of the types of work least desirable from the standpoint of the socialist hierarchy of values (e.g., work endangering health, monotonous work), as well as to changes in the organization of work that enhance the autonomy of man and his teleological function (e.g., extension of the scope of work tasks, purposeful rotation of work).

2. The hierarchy of the distribution of prestige, income, power, and social control attaching to the various types of work may also be changed.

However, no noticeable progress may be observed in either of these regards in the European socialist countries. The fulfillment of the goal that technical development should be adapted, to the greatest possible extent, to the man doing the work, is hindered by several circumstances:

1. These countries started out from a relatively low economic level, accompanied by the already mentioned seclusion. On this account, the increase of production or national income per head was declared the principal economic objective of society, which in itself severely restricted at this stage of progress the possibility of technical development that would eliminate types of work detrimental to the immediate producer. To have pursued this possibility on the given level would have increased the capital coefficient and reduced the dynamism of an economy mechanically identified with the per capital growth of national income.

2. The exaggerated development of heavy industry and the simultaneous one-sided extensive development of industry did not reduce the types of work burdensome to man, but actually increased their proportion. The large-scale increase of manual, materials handling is characteristic of this condition (in Hungary, nearly one million persons are engaged in materials handling, approximately one-fourth of those gainfully employed).

3. The need for more rapid satisfaction of the differentiated demand for various consumer goods has recently gained prominence in the economic objectives. Although this process does have its positive side, since the rise of certain needs is a precondition of the modernization of society and of the extension of the autonomy of man, it has become an end in itself. This may relegate to the background the other goal of society—that is, society should satisfy its needs with as little work as possible and with work corresponding to human nature as much as possible.

All these factors prevented the transformation of the division of labor and of the technical-organizational foundations of the social structure into forms that correspond better to the aims of humanization, within the framework of the changed property relations, than the forms adopted in the countries following the main road to modernization. However, as indicated above, this in itself is not decisive for the social consequences of the technical division of labor, distribution of income and prestige, or for the degree of openness or seclusion of society.

The above-mentioned sociological analyses have demonstrated two facts that are very relevant for our analysis: 1) Important differences can be observed among these

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countries through their position in the technical division of labor, not only in respect of their interests and position in the distribution of income, but also of their respective mode of life. 2) Among the strata differentiated by their concrete position in the division of labor, intrageneration as well as intergeneration mobility is of a low degree.

In conclusion, the initial endeavours aiming at the bringing about of an unstructured and entirely open society have not brought results. They have been replaced partly by resignation and partly by an apologetic ideology that makes the existing differences appear as if they were unimportant and that continues to declare the openness of society in spite of the sociological facts. A more open following of the main road view would change little in this situation. It would, at best, only destroy the illusions mentioned, and make the structural division of society, and the conflicts arising from this, more open.

The Influence of the Acquisitive Consumption Model on the Development of Needs

The appearance of individual needs is generally connected with the level of the economic, especially industrial, development of the various societies. However, this is true only if the individual countries form isolated units or if there is no more advanced economy in their environment that could serve as a model for them.

Today, due to the evolution of mass communication on the one hand, and the large-scale dissolution of political seclusion on the other, the world is becoming more and more an open system. Consequently, the achievements and models of the more advanced countries exercise an increasing influence on the other societies as well. At the same time, the real economic differences have grown unbelievably both with respect to per capital national wealth and national income. Regarding per capita national income, the difference between the poorest and the richest country has grown about ten-fold within a century (approximately from two and a half to twenty-five fold).

All this has a simultaneous positive and a negative effect on the developing countries; it partly facilitates their development (through the possibility of adopting new technical achievements, of which we have already spoken), and partly renders it more difficult (e.g., it multiplies the problems that await solution at any given time). The consumption structure of the developed countries, the influence of which is especially dynamic on the societies of medium development, gives rise on a mass scale to needs (including wants of an entirely new type and new ways of already satisfying the existing ones), which can be satisfied in these countries only through the considerable distortion of the consumption structure, and then only partially.[4] Thus, among strata that cannot even satisfy their fundamental needs on the level of respectable human life, as interpreted for the given country, needs that may seem

4. According to a recent study by Eva Ehrlich, the influence of other models of civilization has caused essential differences to occur between the consumption level of certain articles and the level of national income (the GNP and GDP, respectively). In different periods, the consumption structure of countries reaching a certain economic level late in time necessarily differs from the consumption structure of those which reached this level early. This is especially true, on a lower economic level, of such products as cereals, sugar, hospital beds, and cars; and, on a higher level, of radio and television, of the domestic consumption of electric power, etc. See Eva Ehrlich, "Economic Development and Personal Consumption Levels: an International Comparison," *Acta Oeconomica*, Vol. 6, No. 3.

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quite irrational for the given standard of living do arise and have an effect. Moreover, the people are ready to make great sacrifices for the satisfaction of these needs.

A number of "transitory" achievements of civilization are missing from the consumption model that has emerged, especially among the poorer strata. These include the particularly spectacular corollaries of the "new way of life" (e.g., bodily hygiene, and such utilities as hot water, etc.), as well as, in the given period, those that are no longer novel and extensively advertised. Other needs dropped from this model include those that are hindered from spreading by the lack of conditions that cannot always be provided on an individual basis (e.g, the small supply of dwellings with running water or electricity).[5]

One of the principal characteristics of the consumption model offered by the acquisitive societies is that the satisfaction of the differentiated needs to which it has given rise is attractive not only on account of the utilitarian value of the various objects concerned; but also because they express or confirm one's status, or because they promise to confer a status.[6]

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5. This leads, for example, to consumption anomalies such as the following: in Hungary less than 40 percent of all dwellings have running water, but there is a washing machine in more than 50 percent of the households. Therefore, washing machines are present in large numbers in households where there is no running water. According to research done by the Sociological Institute in Bekes County, 20 percent of the families in this county living below the subsistence level possess a washing machine or intend to buy one in the near future, and the same applies to 60 percent of those living in straitened circumstances.

6. The most characteristic examples of the group of articles over-stimulated by the consumption model of the developed countries today are: clothing, television sets, and automobiles. Clothing is one of the needs that can be appropriately satisfied relatively cheaply in order to feel "equal" with others and thereby, somewhat independent of one's own stratum. This applies especially to the clothing of youth and children—parents often accept considerable material sacrifices for this purpose (e.g., they continue to support their already gainfully employed children over a lengthy period in order to enable them to dress adequately). See again the results of the Bekes County research; for example, the essay by Judit Sas, "Expectations from and Demands Made upon Children in a Rural Community," in Sociological Research Monograph, No. 17, Hungarian Sociological Studies, 1972.

First radio, and then television have become important instruments of intellectual unification, primarily by helping to create the illusion of being cultured and well informed. Moreover, television and radio have an undeniable role in the actual awakening and satisfaction of cultural needs. Already nearly two-thirds of all households in Hungary have television sets, a situation that the state further encourages.

The car also satisfies needs beyond its real function as transportation: first, it represents inequality of income, and, as such, is a status symbol for those occupying a higher social position. Second, as a status symbol, it attracts strata that enjoy a high income, but have low social prestige (e.g., craftsmen, waiters, winegrowers, etc.).

The civilization model of the developed countries has a very ambivalent effect on housing needs. In general, it increases the demand for housing on a mass scale, but also forces the strata with a lower income to reconcile themselves to the given situation, since it is virtually hopeless for them to amass the money necessary for the construction or purchase of a home. The need for housing is, at today's level, far from having been satisfied by the state, a situation creating strong tensions and dissatisfaction.

The influence of the acquisitive model on schooling is in certain respects even more problematic, since it generally does not stimulate the pursuit of knowledge and culture as things valuable in themselves, but rather the acquisition of a kind of knowledge that makes changes in one's occupation favorable or an increase in one's status possible (at least it appears to do so). This, of couse, has an influence on the schooling system itself. But the worst

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For some social strata, consumption oriented toward the satisfaction of such needs appears to obliterate the inequality that exists in the division of labor, the power structure, and the distribution of income. The illusion conceived at the rise of consumer societies is being repeated here, i.e., that consumption would become the arena for social egalitarianism. However, the already privileged strata that, due to their privileged position, can acquire scarce goods and can manifest and confirm their social position through such consumption. These strata may even transform their positional advantage into wealth. Both the distortion of the structure of needs and the differences arising between the social strata refer not only to material consumption, but also to intellectual-cultural consumption.

The possibility of real acculturation is rather restricted for a wide stratum of society, primarily for those whose official and non-official working time absorbs almost their entire day. According to sociological research, the number of such people is not only very considerable, but is growing in spite of the increase of official leisure time. Moreover, there is the spreading of a kind of commercial, mostly passive entertainment, which develops specific recipes for leisure time more than it contributes to the development of the individuality of man.

The development of differentiated needs has increased powerfully the stimulating role of wages. This, incidentally, is one of the most important components of dynamism in acquisitive societies. In the countries in question, however, the effect of this impulse is being reduced by the often chronic shortage of goods. As far as the wealthier strata are concerned, this leads to the phenomenon of forced savings, and for this reason the actual effectiveness of material incentives is less in these countries. This is made worse by the development of the differentiated consumption of the poorer strata which is not sufficiently assisted by the system of consumer credits. On the other hand, with these market relations, the market prices also begin to assert themselves, although gradually, in the sphere of satisfaction of fundamental needs (the raising of the prices of food products and of rents is an almost general phenomenon in the countries under investigation).

Thus, today, due to the shortage of goods, there is restriction of the differentiated consumption awakened on the level of needs, and an increasing penetration of market relations into the satisfaction of fundamental needs. Consequently, this state of affairs may satisfy the requirements of neither dynamism nor humanism. In the present situation, the general advance of market relations would apparently represent a step forward: the formation of the consumption structure would be left to the consumer himelf, and, in this, he would be restricted neither by the shortage of goods nor by the preferences and discriminations applied by specialized agencies of power independent of him. But this in itself is far from ensuring the development of a really humanistic consumption structure, since it is the acquisitive orientations that assert themselves primarily through the market. The formation of a demand and consumption structure actually serving the development of the individual is only possible simultaneously and in connection with the free choice and realization of a rational way of life.

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distortion caused by the model in question concerns self-education and cultural self-improvement. The effect of distortion here is rather manifold: the model partially promotes the acquisition of the narrowly specialized knowledge necessary for a profession, and partly results in a spectacular, "quiz" type of knowledge.

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Is a Third Solution Possible?

As we have tried to demonstrate, at present in the countries mentioned, the main road approach may serve the dynamic development of the economy more consistently and efficiently and, thereby, raise the standard of living; but within certain limits it may even further the democratization of social life. However, this may lead the countries in question to a forced path that, though it may ensure more comfortable living conditions for the population (but does not restore the private property of the means of production) it may also bring into existence an essentially profit-oriented acquisitive society.

Therefore, we are of the opinion that in the face of both the statist and main road models, a path has to be worked out that, at least *in theory*, jointly satisfies the objectives of dynamism and humanism. A means of development must be worked out that breaks radically with the traditional solutions, taking into consideration all the analyses and practical experiences that have realistically demonstrated the actual consequences of these solutions. This means of development must take the new trends into account—intensive development, the emphasis on differentiated needs—and at the same time, should not use the main road approach as it is practiced in advanced capitalist countries as an example to be followed. The new model should accept the theoretical and practical criticisms of the main road view on the basis of socialist, or more widely, humanistic values, concerning the spheres of production and consumption and of public and private life. Thus, a model is wanted that can reconcile the striving for economic efficiency with the tendencies of humanization in the period of transition to intensive development; it should reduce the alienating consequences of the division of labor both technically and socially to a considerable extent; and it should ensure the fundamental needs on the level of respectable human life to all members of society, simultaneously serving to develop the individual through the production and satisfaction of his differentiated needs and ensuring him a wide choice among modes of life.

For us, dynamism, one of the basic requirements of such a model, is not identical with the statistically measured growth of national income or even of national wealth. We define dynamism as the increasing efficiency of socially useful activities in the broadest sense of the word, which includes the production of material goods and the domains of education or public health. Increased efficiency manifests itself partly in the fact that already existing needs can be satisfied, in the sense of simple reproduction, with a reduced labor input, and partly in the fact that new needs are created (including the need for leisure time). In our opinion, important aspects of this development model cannot be measured by the growth of either national income or national wealth, and cannot be linked rationally to the scope of either market or profit interests.

Social dynamism so understood is closely connected with our view of humanization. One of the most important requirements of humanism is that people should not only be in a position to choose the way in which they wish to satisfy their needs, but also to choose the hierarchy of the needs themselves. This is impossible unless people can choose between various modes of life, and can bring about social conditions that stimulate the development and the adequate self-realization of their real individuality (i.e., conditons that promote the formation of modes of life capable of transmitting the material and cultural wealth of society to every individual). These goals appear unrealizable without the development on a mass-

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scale of communities that are subjected neither to the rule of the market nor to the monopolistic ambitions of the state, but that represent an effective social force in the face of both. The essence of such a path is not that the market replaces the administrative bureaucracy, or that, the other way around, the state bureaucracy, establishes a severe control over the market or even abolishes it; but that social conditions are created so that neither force is able to step beyond the function of *serving* the efficiency of society. The choice of the mode of life, and determination of the production and consumption preferences and discriminations, should pass into the hands of the communities representing a real social force able to dominate both the state bureaucracy and the market.

We have attempted to analyse concrete problems of such a new path in several studies in recent years.[7] However, as long as these problems are raised separately, they might give rise to the illusion that they may be solved in an isolated way, without any thorough structural transformation. In reality, their solution may be conceived only as part of a general transformation of society.

Naturally, all this poses the question of whether in the East European countries concerned, it is possible in a practical sense to change over to a path of development that would jointly fulfill the two main postulates described above. We do not wish to become lost here in the discussion of details arising from the concrete economic situation which, in our view, does not in itself represent an unsurmountable obstacle. However, the realization of such changes cannot be conceived before a realistic social demand has been developed for them on a more or less massive scale and has become an effective force in society. In other words, the practical realization of this alternative of the socialist development is impossible on the basis of even the best intentioned power decisions, without the initiative and activity of the masses.

The real question here is whether there are needs in the various strata of the societies in question that can be satisfied by neither of the two models already in use—the statist and the main road models. In other words, does the need for radical change exist today or can we at least count on its emergence?

It is not easy to answer this question, since the societies concerned ideologically consider the satisfaction of this need the task of the state, although this is mostly done in a way that disillusions people. Yet, this need can be found among various strata and groups of society (we see them in the various strata of youth), even if rather sporadically and timidly. We have written of such initiatives in our study on the community, and we may read about them in the book by Laszlo-Bencsik now being published as part of the *Discovery of Hungary* series. Thus, the matter is at least not hopeless.

Then again, the relationship of the so-called broad masses is not unequivocally positive toward either of the two models discussed above. The irrationality of the first—being bound to shortages and to the attending discomforts of everyday life and the restrictions it imposes—have disillusioned people with respect to the solutions offered by it. At the same time, their relationship to the second model is

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7. See "The Role of Values in the Long Range Planning of Distribution and Consumption," *The Sociological Review Monograph*, No. 17, Hungarian Sociological Studies, 1972; "Community and the Individual," *Kortars*, No. 12 (1970); "Hierarchy and the Principle of Accomplishment," *Kozgazdasagi Szemle*, No. 11 (1970), and "Leisure and the Division of Labour," *Acta Oeconomica* (1972, forthcoming).

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also much more ambivalent than is generally thought. Today, in the eyes of the masses, the achievements offered by the main road model afford even greater privileges and material well-being to the already privileged strata, and, consequently, their enthusiasm for it is far from unequivocal.

Thus, regarding the strength of social forces, although we cannot be expressly positive, they seem sufficiently strong to make the search for a different alternative of progress a rational endeavour.

Marginal Notes on Prague Spring 1968

by Ivan Svitak

I. Theory

> "The bureaucracy has in its possession the affairs of the state, the spiritual being of society; it belongs to it as its private property... The bureaucrat sees the world as a mere object to be managed by him." —Karl Marx, *Werke*, I, 249-250

In what kind of society did the Prague Spring 1968 take place? The nature of East European societies and the Soviet Union can be described in different terms—according to the theory underlying the empirical structure of facts or according to the meaning which we give to the facts, events and persons themselves. If we do not know the significance of historical phenomena, then we do not know in fact the phenomena themselves, and we read history as Petrushka did, when he read the individual letters without grasping of what he read. In other words, it depends upon the a priori theories, premises and postulates which we apply because without them the isolated facts are deprived of the context, significance and meaning, and are therefore ultimately meaningless. Although the flood of books on Czechoslovak events would seem to indicate that various approaches were applied, the truth is that most of the analyses move on the empirical surface of data. The key question: "what kind of society existed in Czechoslovakia at that time?" is never raised. There are at least six fundamental answers to this question. A formulation of these theories about the Soviet ("socialist") society offers perhaps the best way out of the confusions of reformist communism in which the adherents of socialism with a human face are entangled insofar as they are not able to learn from their own mistakes.

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Historically, the first theory which denied the socialist nature to the newly-established society of the Soviets was the theory of state capitalism advocated by the left wing of the Workers' Communist party of Germany. The second theory was based on Trotsky's concept of a degenerated workers' state. The disintegration of Trotskyism during World War II and the comparison of Hitlerism and Stalinism gave rise to the third types of theories in the 1940s. First of all, it was the theory of the totalitarian dictatorship which first appeared during the critical period of the Soviet-Nazi Pact in England and the U.S. (Borkenau 1940, S. Neuman 1942, H. Arendt) and rendered accurately the structural analogies of modern dictatorships of the Soviet and Nazi type. A similar effort to formulate more generally the historical experience of European countries resulted in J. Burnham's theory of the managerial revolution. Burnham saw identical phenomena in the technocratic systems of various countries and assigned, contrary to his original premises, a positive role to modern managers. While these two variants were widely popularized, the most valuable contribution of Bruno Rizzi (and also M. Schachtman later on), namely the theory of bureaucratic collectivism remained virtually unknown. Yet, it is precisely this theory which provides the best key for understanding postwar development in the USSR, the role of the bureaucracy and peculiar features of the technocratic society in contemporary Czechoslovakia.

All three principal approaches to Soviet society—state capitalism of the 1920s, Trotskyism of the 1930s, and the wartime concepts of bureaucratic collectivism and totalitarian dictatorship had been formulated before the so-called people's-democratic regimes came into being in Central Europe; all of them were developed within the Marxist ideological tradition, in dependence on the working-class movement, but outside the USSR. They have certain features in common which are very essential for understanding the development in Central Europe because they generalize precisely that state of Soviet society which has been exported by Soviet tanks to the countries occupied by the Soviet army and implanted by force into the new conditions of social vacuum after the collapse of fascism. In the first place, these theories deny the socialist nature of the society in the Soviet Union: they do not regard either Lenin's or Stalin's state as the realization of Marx's vision, but rather as the direct opposite of the goals pursued by the socialist movement. Furthermore, all theories state the rise of a new stratum (possibly a class or caste) of bureaucracy or technocracy which not only rules in fact, but whose very existence depends precisely on the newly-established totalitarian regime. This new stratum of power elite betrayed the world socialist revolution because of their own special interests and abandoned the international program both at home and abroad; a new political revolution against this stratum is inevitable. Precisely these conceptual systems were an absolute taboo in the Soviet sphere of interest; their accurate, penetrating and empirically-backed content could only clandestinely be smuggled into those ideological schemes which substituted for theory in Czechoslovakia and the USSR.

After the war, these theories were formulated anew as Milovan Djilas' theory of the new class, Kuron-Modzelewski's theory of monopoly socialism and, finally, as socialism with a human face, advocated both by the Czech and Soviet reformist communists (Sakharov). Although the terminology is new, all these three postwar theories stem from the previous ones and have many features in common with them. First of all, they arose as theories criticizing the already existing "socialist" societies

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in Central Europe, in other words, as practical-empirical doctrines which gave reasons for specific national features and goals. Furthermore, they arose as the parallels to the attempts to modify the political regimes of postrevolutionary societies of the Soviet type and aimed at structural changes rather than at a direct social revolution. Finally, they were moderately or openly anti-Soviet because the USSR appears, in the perspective of national communisms, as a colonial power. In the Soviet Union they are therefore regarded as dangerous, hostile and regardless of their content, as anarchistic Trotskyism or Maoism. Are these theories really that dangerous—and if they are, then why? Apart from the terminological tools used, all these theories confront the Soviet power elite with the searching question concerning the nature of the given regime and thus implicitly raise the question of legitimacy of that totalitarian power which every elite regards as its prerogative, and which is justifiable only if the society is indeed new, socialist and classless.

How does the soviety society appear in the terminological mirror of these theories? Always in unfavorable light—as a class, exploiting society controlled by the state, and according to the best of these theories, the theory of bureaucratic collectivism, as something that it really is, namely as a class society *sui generis*. The latest interpretation of Rizzi-Schachtman's theory of bureaucratic collectivism (expounded in Antonio Carlo's book *Politische und ökonomische Struktur der UdSSR*, Berlin, 1972), represents the most accurate characterization of the Soviet Union so far. Antonio Carlo correctly overcomes the shortcomings of previous theories, when he refuses to characterize the Soviet society as state capitalist because the laws of the market, of the production of exchange values and surplus value do not operate there, while expanded reproduction does. The system, however, cannot be described as socialist either, because it is not confined to the production of use-values and is based on the class rule of a bureaucracy which has appropriated the means of production, surplus product and absolute power over the working class which it exploits. Finally, the system is not a transitory society because it is in the sixth decade of its existence, and though the fusion of public power with ownership may remind us of oriental despotism, the industrial nature of the regime makes it impossible to regard the Soviet system as an analogy of the agrarian-feudal, Asian method of production. Well then, what is it? "The Soviet society is a class society *sui generis* which is neither capitalist nor socialist, but a special system of antagonistic contradictions with dynamics of its own and with collective, bureaucratic ownership of the means of production" (A. Carlo).

What follows from these theories for understanding the Prague Spring 1968? First of all the fact—completely ignored by the majority of reformist communists—that Czech society must be regarded as a class society of a special type in which the principal antagonism was and is between the power elite and people, between bureaucracy of regressive apparatuses and the nation, or to put it more accurately, between the classes of the given economic structure of an exploiting and class society. Here is the boundary which the reformist communists do not want to cross because they portray the crisis of the bureaucratic apparatus as a Czech national crisis and regard themselves, erroneously, as the spokesmen for the nation. They in fact express, however, only a modified variant of views cherished by the repressive power elite and exploiting class. Czech society has never ceased, not even under Dubček, to be a class society with the subjugated working class; the oppressive

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apparatus of the "socialist" state has never ceased to work as the oppressive machinery of technocratic bureaucracy; finally, the ideology of "reason and conscience" or "socialism with a human face" never and nowhere admitted that the political conflicts in 1968-69 were in fact class conflicts. During the period of nation-wide enthusiasm, this consciousness was a privilege of extremists—both on the left and on the right—and it is still regarded as a *faux pas* both at home and in the emigration not to take for gospel truth what the intellectual spokesmen for Stalinist bureaucracy and the apparatus of the "reformist" Communist Party thought of themselves during the fits of "reason" and "conscience." The Prague Spring was not theoretically recognized as a conflict of classes, strata or groups—neither at the time when it took place nor subsequently after the defeat of reformist communism—because it was the occupation—but only it alone—which eventually made the democratization in fact a concern of the entire nation regardless of classes, and, paradoxically, promoted the oppressive elite of the Communist Party to the potential defenders of national sovereignty. The occupation occurred just before personal intrigues in the Politbureau and the ideology of a literary journal threatened to turn into a real class conflict between the working class allied with the intelligentsia, against the bureaucracy and technocracy of the exploiting state.

The potential, but theoretically only vaguely defined conflict between the humanists and technocrats, reflecting the key antagonism between the power elite and controlled producers, between the exploiting and exploited, between the privileged and the masses without rights, this was and is the fundamental conflict of Czech society before and after the occupation. We must study fetishism of power in this new class society irrespective of what the spokesmen think of themselves today or did prior to the occupation; we must study that paralyzing sclerosis of the party apparatus which like smut attacks the bureaucracy of the oppressive party and state apparatuses, and follow up the degeneration of the totalitarian dictatorship disregarding the false consciousness which surrounds the fundamental issues of the Prague Spring—five years later in the same way as it did in the period when the democratization reached its peak. Unfortunately, it is not enough to see in this society a special system of class conflicts, and it does not matter what we call it: whether state capitalism, deformed workers' state, managerial socialism, monopoly socialism or bureaucratic collectivism. It is imperative to change it, in other words to uproot the totalitarian dictatorship and fetishism of power of the bureaucratic elite.

II. Practice

> "Every nation has the government it deserves." —Karl Marx

Almost two hundred books were published about the Prague experiment with socialist democracy. An overwhelming majority of them were written from the positions of reformist communism or positions close to the view that a socialist society existed in Czechoslovakia which only should be made more humane, more liberal and more democratic. The authors of these books, mostly the defenders of reformist communists, by implication assume that the contradictions of late native Stalinism could have been resolved in a democratic way, that socialist democracy was an acceptable and desired alternative to the Dubcek leadership (was it indeed?),

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and finally that Czech socialist society needed a political reform only in order to offer a universal solution to the world. Another typical approach to the Czech experiment, interrupted by the occupation, is much more sceptical to previous optimism, corresponds to Western mistrust of communism of any type and is occasionally burdened with anti-communist propaganda so that a priori implied postulates of an ideological nature are involved in the game, too. The third approach to the year 1968 is taken only exceptionally, i.e., when Czech society is characterized as a class society with the market economy, exploiting state and totalitarian dictatorship of monopoly bureaucracy. Only according to this third theory does Czech society appear as what it actually was and is; this as a rule represents an indigestible dose of truth even for reformist communists. As a result, this view is currently denounced as Maoism, Trotskyism, anarchism, revisionism, or social democratism.

In actual fact, however, this has nothing to do with Maoism or anarchism, but is the recognition of the truth that the Czech society has never been a socialist society, only an exploiting, class, monopolistic economic structure with the state as the organ of class violence used by state bureaucracy against the enslaved masses, and with the monopoly of information. Neither the Stalinist nor the reformist communists of the Czech power elite have ever ceased to be the advocates of the system of the collective ownership to the means of production which formally have been declared the ownership of the people, but in fact are in the collective ownership of the new class of state bureaucrats. While the private entrepreneur owns the means of production directly, the bureaucrats own them indirectly (as a class, changing the content of the term ownership into the privilege of administration and total control over the state ownership. Political power which is conferred upon bureaucracy is essentially of the same nature as power clothed in the private owner of the means of production, but is greater than under capitalism because the monopoly of power is universal, comprises absolute control over production, things, people and state as well, and does not tolerate either checks or opposition. The monopoly of power is universal and fetishism of power acts with the same brutal openness as fetishism of commodities dictates the logic of money on the market. Under these conditions, the working class, all its blue and white collar members, is completely deprived of the influence over the product of its work and its distribution, does not determine nor does it participate in the determination of wages, efficiency standards or working time, does not have its own organizations and produces for a subsistence minimum. The fruits of its labor are disposed of by bureaucracy which maintains a repressive apparatus against the working class and intelligentsia. The working people are thus exploited in this system much more intensively than in any other economic system, and have almost no means of economic and political self-defense at their disposal. This system was and is common to the Soviet and Czech society, and no power elite will ever abolish itself voluntarily—regardless of the person who heads it, whether Krushchev or Stalin, Novotny or Dubček.

During the period, when it was drawing on towards the internal conflict in the KSC Politbureau, Czech society was a fully constituted class society of the new type, monopoly socialism (to borrow Kuron-Modzelewski's term) or bureaucratic collectivism (to use the term coined by Rizzi). It was a society with the bureaucratic elite, despotic dictatorship as the state form and with the class conflicts which were

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reflected as group and individual interests in the apparatus of the Communist Party. The incompetence of technocratic managers and disorientation of bureaucracy, however, unwittingly created a political unity of the nation which—against the will of both Stalinists and reformers—posed as the central issue, not the economic nature of the regime, but the checks on technocracy through the democratic process from below. This idea of socialist democracy was not completely new because it was this very idea which achieved the greatest and decisive successes as reflected in the nationalization of industry and democratization of public life during the dynamic but democratic, socialist but non-desired by the technocrats, bureaucrats, or even the leading intellectuals of reform communism, and emerged eventually, thanks to the spontaneous activity of agitated masses, as a frightening alternative. Against the will of reformist communists, the tamely conceived technocratic reform assumed thus a completely new dimension which nobody had anticipated and which gave the irreconcilable conflict between the technocratic and democratic interpretation of the "Spring renaissance" as christening present to the new movement. Socialist democracy could and can be brought into being. It is not and was not the chiliasts' utopia, but could be accomplished only in opposition to the bureaucratic apparatuses, technocratic elite and repressive state machinery, and never in cooperation with them.

The first plan of the reformist communists simply represented the Czech version of Soviet Libermanism, in other words, of the ideology which provided for the determination of prices by the market mechanism. This would be, of course, questionable even if we would espouse this ideology. First of all, Libermanism does not resolve the structural problems of Soviet or Czech society, namely how to increase the production of consumer goods, and only assumes that market relationships would automatically stimulate production better than a central plan. Perhaps. The Libermanist reformers, however, can achieve an increase in the production of consumer goods only at the price of rapproachement with capitalism, in other words, through the expansion of trade with the capitalist countries and more active participation of the USSR and Czechoslovakia in world trade, which in turn results in the willy-nilly adjustment to the laws of the capitalist market and to the principles governing the commodity economy. Not only Mao, but also the opponents of Libermanism, regard—and support with excellent arguments—this way as the "capitalist method" or anarchy of production because—there is no use denying it—as soon as the legal and economic subject meet on the market in order to determine the value of goods, the logic of capitalism gains the upper hand. Libermanism, of course, has an indisputable political advantage—viewed as the key disadvantage by the apparatchiks—that a market economy would automatically necessitate the transfer of power from the centralistic planning by the party apparatus, i.e., from the party bureaucracy, to the market-oriented enterprises or technocracy because the price policy would be formulated on the market—beyond the reach of planning bureaucracy. As a result, the central control of the economic process would collapse because the sum of measures would amount to the "expropriation of bureaucracy by technocracy" (A. Carlo).

In its first variant, the Prague Spring was nothing but an attempt for such a Liberman-like modernization of the technocratic apparatus. The official documents of the Communist Party and the terms of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences designed the ideological tools which were to throw dust into the working class' and

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intelligentsia's eyes, and to pretend that under the Marxist coating there was something else than naked interests of the bureaucratic elite which wanted to rule pragmatically and without an ideology. This elite was willing to make concessions to the properly behaving intellectuals, while all the time determined to pound the table whenever the delicate question of power was involved. Yet, the changes in the leadership brought about such displacements of power that, during the interim period in which the apparatus proved shaky, the intelligentsia (and not the apparatus) suddenly appeared as the moving force of the nation. Dubček had to go along, for purely tactical reasons, with this new democratic wave and to flirt outside his legal marriage with Moscow. This, in Moscow's opinion, constituted an inexcusable mesalliance. The coalition of intelligentsia and workers against the bureaucrats, this actual democracy of the majority of the nation against the repressive apparatuses of the power elite, this was that unacceptable idea of socialist democracy against which the tanks had to be set in motion. To blame the intellectuals retrospectively for this process and to regard them as accomplices or main culprits of the national catastrophe is stupid. In Czechoslovakia and also in the emigration, however, the view has been seriously expressed that, had the journalists not made provocations, the Soviets would not have occupied Prague. What was the actual role of intellectuals in this process?

First of all, the intellectuals are specialists in abstractions and since the renaissance, when they first appeared as a social stratum (to be sure not as individuals only), they have always been humanists; historically, they have been the enemies of the state, church and property (privileges). Intellectuals frequently are doctrinaires because they want to implement their abstractions; they are radical because they get only unwillingly reconciled with compromises (in contrast to other more practically oriented groups); finally, they usually are romantic, inquisitive and utopian. Intellectuals are like this always and everywhere, not only in Bohemia and Moravia in spring of 1968. So, if by coincidence of circumstances the monopoly of information (i.e., censorship) breaks down and intellectuals get a free hand, their views are reflected in action and in the press. What horror! They know how to formulate new ideas, are able to express themselves or to write a Czech sentence without anyone's assistance, and have confidence in their own common sense. As soon as Dubček made concessions to the intelligentsia and abolished censorship (his fundamental "mistake"), the Czech intelligentsia was automatically pushed into the leading position without actually having striven for it: among the one-eyed kings of the Politbureau, normal clearsightedness with common sense was something close to heavenly Providence. The upper layer of the intelligentsia, i.e., prominent intellectuals, writers, scientists, artists and journalists tacitly formed a coalition with the reformers of the party and state apparatus because their interests temporarily coincided. To put it more accurately, the apparatus was willing to tolerate the party intelligentsia and to assign a more responsible role to it insofar as it retained the role of maidservant that the bureaucrats' "only correct" Marxism assigned to it forever—regardless of the power shifts in the Politbureau. Yet, it turned out otherwise. Why?

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Czech intellectuals can be reprimanded for many reasons; they could not transcend the bounds given to every intelligentsia by every power elite; they could not change their social role and responsibility for the past; they could not abandon the middle position which they occupied between the working class and party apparatus. And they could not take the arrogant stupidity of party illiterates for the intellectual leadership of the nation. Attributing the responsibility for the ultimate debacle to them, however, is a halftruth because where there is no responsibility, there is no guilt either. The Czech intellectuals can be blamed for many things, but only one reproach is valid. With rare exceptions, even the prominent intellectuals were not able to state the fundamental issues of socialism's meaning, class relationships, the role of the Communist Party, and did not theoretically attempt to formulate the conceptual platform—apart from the slogans "socialism with a human face," "reason and conscience." The programmatic manifest "Two Thousand Words" was a morally motivated outcry of desperation over a twenty-year-old dictatorship, but it did not pose nor solve any theoretical issues—perhaps because a pragmatic statement had more weight than a general theory at the time. Only after the occupation, the fundamental instability of views manifested itself, first as the consciousness of injustice done to prominent intellectuals by removing them from their positions. After the last reformist communists had been defeated, there was a gradual realization by the nation of the inconsistencies in the Action Program which was reflected both in scepticism about the defeated ideology of reform and in the "illegal" more critical ideology that was independent of the defeat of "socialists with a human face."

Czech intellectuals assumed their political role unexpectedly and unintentionally—as a result of the course of events rather than of their own will. The intellectuals in the artists' clubs were simply pushed to the fore as spokesmen for the middle classes and the intelligentsia in general. By advocating their own group interests, they implicitly formulated the interests of the nation, of the working class and a section of the ruling elite. The intellectuals, however, failed to see the conflict between the technocrats and humanists, did not regard the latent conflict as a conflict of classes, and did not aspire to the leadership at all. We can therefore reproach them only for being too little intellectual, for letting themselves be confused by the vistas of a technocratic change, and for being satisfied with confining their theoretical effort to expressing a vague suspicion that the Prague Spring was a Party's new fraud. This, of course, was a disquieting truth stated by the extremists in both wings during the national enthusiasm over the signing of various resolutions. The reformist communist intellectuals were engaged with the Dubček party apparatus for several months in shadow boxing which looked beautiful before the nation and which helped paralyze those tendencies which neither of the sparring partners wanted to awake: democracy, humanism, socialism from below. To be sure, when a sheep gets horns, it does not mean that it also becomes a carnivorous animal which can successfully defend itself against the wolves. The Soviets knocked out both partners in shadow boxing during a few hours in which the occupation was carried out, and the master of the ring entrusted the problem of socialist democracy to the Central Group of Soviet troops stationed at Milovice, Central Bohemia.

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III. Prospects.

> "I am still convinced that the only possible change in Eastern Europe is the reform of the system carried out within the ruling party. He whom the big power policy and the contemporary international development failed to convince about it is a naive dreamer who should not get mixed up in politics." —Radoslav Selucky
> (leading Czech reformer)
> interview with *Telegram*, 15 Jan. 1973

To proceed from a personal conviction, to declare one's own opinion to be the criterion of truth and to exclude promptly from politics everybody who dissents is an accomplishment which requires above all a very thorough training in Stalinism. Pounding the table with a fist is simpler. The reform communists, however, were fond of pretending both prior to and after the occupation that their enthusiasm for democracy was genuine and that they by no means wanted to exclude from politics anybody who did not share the view that the reform had to be carried out by the Communist Party. The view quoted above does not represent a clumsy formulation of some sort of misunderstanding, but rather an accurate statement of conceptual principles from which the democratization as interpreted by the reform communists was derived: the reform will be carried out either by us, i.e., by the apparatus of the Communist Party, or by nobody. And if you entertain different opinion, then out with you from politics, you naive dreamers, because the big power policy and the contemporary international development is properly understood only by us, the reformed party elite.

On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of the nation was and is convinced that the only potential change in Eastern Europe consists of the political structural reform of the system which will be carried out in opposition to the apparatuses of the totalitarian dictatorship, i.e., in opposition to the ruling elite and the Communist Party, regardless of the fact whether or not the power elite just happens to suffer from the democratization migraine. He who has not yet been convinced about that by the Soviet policy in Hungary, Poland, German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia and Albania, is a naive dreamer even if he does not realize it. If the alternative to the change is the continuation of the power monopoly of bureaucracy of the totalitarian dictatorship, then it is questionable whether this is an alternative at all because the grim facts of Soviet and Polish changes in 1956 demonstrate that the new power elite needs but a few years to turn the national heroes again into the hated apparatchiks of the oppressive regime. The author of the above quotation essentially reiterates the same thing that was declared by E. Goldstucker earlier—namely that the leading role of the Communist Party is and will remain the alpha and omega of all changes which the reform Stalinists are willing to admit. Not a step further.

It is precisely on this point that they part company with the 90 percent of the nation which has learned by now so much about the fraudulent democratization

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game practiced by the reform Stalinists that in every future crisis it will necessarily regard as naive dreamers those theoreticians and politicians who will try again to "sell" the putrid and rotting Stalinist doctrine of reform within the ruling party instead of a fundamental change, instead of real democracy which would replace the governing party by the rule of the people. Social processes which took place in the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968, in the liquidation of mass strikes in Poland in 1970, in military interventions in the Baltic states in 1972—all this rather conclusively demonstrates that the apparatus of the bureaucratic elite has become unacceptable, although a segment of the elite was willing to democratize and reform the system to such an extent as to keep the reform within "the ruling party." Here again we face the central issue which killed the Prague Spring in 1968, namely, the conflict between the two irreconcilable concepts of reform—the technocratic and democratic concepts. And at this point, being inspired by the above quotation, we must again remind ourselves that even the best ones among the reformed Stalinists will again be ready to stab the democratization in the back whenever the people's activity will transcend the limits tolerated by them, and that we must not take seriously their coquetry with the democratic principles even when it seems that they are willing to share power. They are not. One of those wanted to make the system more democratic says so quite frankly: either you will do it in cooperation with the ruling party or out with you, naive dreamers, from politics. This is not a paradox, this is not a slip of the tongue. This is the truth as stated by the reformed Stalinist, a truth as plain as a punch in the mouth. Such a frank statement must be answered by an equally frank rebuff because this is the only possible way in which we can communicate.

A realistic alternative to the reform communism of the bureaucratic elite has always existed, and the Czech Politbureau knows this as well as the police. This alternative is nothing else but a socialist perspective, in other words no naive dreaming, chiliastic romanticism, revolutionary enthusiasm, but the tradition which is most deeply rooted in the Czech people, in the nation, in the working class movement. Historically, the idea of socialism was identical with democracy, which represents the apex of mankind's striving; precisely because of that, it is absolutely irreconcilable with the Communist Party or rather with the Leninist elitism of professional apparatchiks. Socialists are separated from the communists by that abyss which was dug out between Marxism and Stalinism by Lenin, when he discarded the idea underlying the First International: "The liberation of the working class must be achieved by the working class itself." This fundamental principle of authentic Marxism and the tradition of social democracy was, is, and will remain an irreconcilable opposite to the Soviet or Czech, reformed or orthodox, diluted or full-blooded Stalinism; it was, is, and will remain in insurmountable distance from the elitists who regard people as *objects* of revolutionary activity, but as nothing more. Neo-Stalinism, i.e., the elitist faith in the reforms to be carried out by the "ruling party," is the absolute opposite of every revolutionary movement revolting against the oppressive machinery of the modern state. There is no other political force or other ideology of which the Czech elite even after the occupation was more afraid than this authentic, democratic socialism: in other words, the tradition represented by the Czech social democratic party for 90 years. A more appropriate name—socialist democracy—became the hope against the leading role

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of the party and police, against that theoretical trash which is marketable, we hope, only in Husak's Prague.

Socialist democracy is the only desirable alternative to the present conditions in Prague. It is the only European, realistic and real alternative to the rule of the bureaucratic-technocratic elite which is, of course, willing to engage in other masquerades in order to maintain the present dictatorship even without the support of tanks. Socialist democracy, however, is incompatible with the idea of reform carried out within the existing Party because it is the exact opposite of the elitist practice of bureaucracy, and because authentic socialism (Marxism) cannot betray the interests of the working class, the blue and white collar workers, in exchange for prestige or privileged status of intellectuals. Socialism in contrast to communism still expresses the will and effort of the working people and not of the manipulators of history who speak and act in the name of the working class. Unfortunately, we do not have any other choice but to say frankly that bureaucracy maintained by Novotny, Dubček, and Husak was, is, and will remain hostile to the interests of the working class, intelligentsia and nation, that it would be foolish on our part to expect that it will ever demand or carry out a reform, and that, if we want to remain loyal to the idea of socialism, we must rely upon those forces which will ultimately subject the totalitarian dictatorships and the monopoly of the elite's power to the will of the nation. Socialist democrats—historically, the social democrats—must therefore insist on the principles of authentic socialism which was and is identical with the development of the democratic rule, and must therefore reject the orientation which replaces the real message of freedom for the working people—liberating themselves through their own movement—by an elitistic lie, even if it is promulgated by the reform-minded technocrats and intellectuals. Socialist democracy represents the only alternative to social technocracy.

Socialist democracy is the only prospect which was not destroyed by the defeat of the Czechoslovak experiment. It is the only orientation which can find support of the absolute majority of the nation; it is the only potential force which together with the main segments of the nation can oppose the power of the technocratic-bureaucratic elite, the totalitarian dictatorship and the apparatus of the Communist Party. We cannot foresee under what conditions the decisive conflict between socialist democracy and the bureaucratic elite, between the alliance of middle classes and the working class (motivated by their common interests) against the coalition of apparatchiks and technocrats (motivated by their special interests) will take place or which form it will assume. We can only say that it will have to occur, that it will be much more difficult than the problems of the 1968-69 period, and that technocracy will do everything in its power, at the critical moment, in order to divert attention from the central problems by a new mythology of reform communism. Bureaucracy will again be ready to deceive and to disguise, behind the mask of some "good-natured fellow," the cool power calculation of inhuman machine of terror, exploitation and privileges. The power elite in Prague knows very well today that socialist democracy represents a mortal danger to it, and that an explosive conflict, built-in in the present social relationships, makes a clash between the elite and nation unavoidable. The technocrats will therefore try to loosen the authoritative social structure, to relax the oppression by the regime, to corrupt the producers by higher standards of living and to cultivate the intersts of the middle classes. Technocracy is *ersatz* socialist democracy. This substitute will last only until an

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open society will come into being. The regime is only as strong as its police. Will it last? It cannot certainly do so in the long run unless the unwillingness of the people to fight for freedom can indeed be erased from human nature.

Collaborationists will soon have to maneuver in a different way because the potential complications resulting from the present detente will push them into the corner. The idea of what will happen when the tanks depart must strike them with dismal horror. Can the Prague Spring be repeated as a new fraud perpetrated by the reformist communists? Certainly. If Gomulka could become a member of the Polish Politbureau immediately after being released from prison, why can't Dubček do the same after being relieved of his position in the forest administration—in order to complete his Gomulka-like role in the Czech history which will end in the shooting of striking workers? Can the Czechoslovak experiment with socialism with a human face be repeated? Certainly, but the reality of a latent conflict will be as merciless as it was just prior to the occupation, because a new Dubček, whose name could also be Husak, will not be able to control this conflict forever. He will either grant democratic rights to the middle classes and then will not be able to stay in the saddle, or he will not do so—in which case his coquetry will end. The intelligentsia hopes to obtain more freedom and socialist democracy and so do the workers. The restoration of Dubček's program will again open Pandora's box with the fundamental (class) problems of the Czech social structure. Without enactment of organized socialist democracy it will offer Dubček only a chance to become another Husak and to bring the dialectical logic of the fraud of the "reform of the system within the ruling party" to an end. The Czech good little man would probably accept as the national hero a person who put his signature on the disgraceful documents sanctioning the occupation and limiting state sovereignty, and would trust reform communism until the Gomulka-type volleys into the workers to put an end to the myth of national heroes and to reforms of the system by the ruling class.

A more probable alternative during the next period of the detente—five to ten years—consists in a technocratic solution. After all, the technocrats were not defeated. They only implement economic changes without humanistic illusions which the reform communists unwittingly created and which never were part of their political program. This virtually amounts to negotiating with the working class over the heads of the intelligentsia and middle classes, to neutralizing radical demands by a grandiose social policy, to corrupting technocrats and consolidating the power machine, i.e., the apparatuses of the party, police, and army. Why should not Husak be able to accomplish the same thing as Bismarck and De Gaulle did under different conditions, and to implement thus Dubček's real, non-illusive program? Making the productive intelligentsia part of the technocratic machinery is imperative in every industrialized society in which technology (and not a physical strength of hired labor force) plays a decisive role. To give this intelligentsia limited jurisdiction, but to carefully see to it that the actual power does not escape from the hands of the bureaucratic elite—this is precisely what the gaullist movement in France has been doing for fifteen years, successfully for the time being. Although the Czech totalitarian dictatorship of monopolistic bureaucracy survived the crisis and consolidated its position on a crisis level, it has not resolved any of the conflicts which necessarily lead to the anti-totalitarian, anti-monopoly, and anti-bureaucratic revolution, as inevitably as the laws of history brought the downfall of the Olympians.

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Can Phenomenology Accomodate Marxism?

by Efraim Shmueli

In the last decades serious attempts have been made to bring together Edmund Husserl's phenomenology with Marxist dialectical materialism. Although the phenomenological strain of Marxism could already be found in the thirties, particularly in the writings of Herbert Marcuse, this trend has become more prevalent after World War II. In fact, the phenomenological approach became very strong in some communist countries, particularly in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. Before the Russians occupied Prague, Karel Kosik's book, *Die Dialektik des Konkreten* (1967), exercised considerable influence.[1] These attempts to build a synthesis out of Husserl and Marx have broken down barriers between two major intellectual trends which were once considered irreconcilable. Husserl's description of the crisis of Western civilization, and his passionate appeal to transcendental reason, intersubjective and universal, in his posthumous work, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, especially opened some possible interconnections. Thus a host of phenomenological Marxists or Marxist phenomenologists, like Enzo Paci and Pier Aldo Rovatti and their associates in *Telos*, try to discover Marxist problems, aims and methods in phenomenology, on the one hand, and a transcendental phenomenological grounding in the theory of Marx, on the other.

One can sympathize with Piccone's statement that, "no matter how much one tries to reformulate or strengthen Marxism, it appears today as a set of slogans which at best are presented with the pretenses of objective science. In fact, they turn out to be so many categories which occlude rather than clarify social reality."[2] This proposition, almost a pronunciation on the bankruptcy of classical Marxian theory, seems to describe a state of both socio-political and theoretical affairs. Thus, neo-Marxism attempts to relive the Marxian heritage through phenomenology. However, great as the need of Marxism is for a phenomenological critique to make it relevant again, it is hard to prove Piccone's thesis that "today, when Marxism is deep in crisis, Husserl is to serious Marxists what Hegel was to Marx."[3] I see even more difficulties in the following comparison of the same writer: "To the extent that Husserl's *Crisis* can function as a starting-point for such a critique, it can be considered the most relevant Marxist text since Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* and, as such, it must be carefully studied rather than summarily dismissed."[4]

But Piccone himself is well aware of the difficulties involved in any serious effort to reconcile, or even accomodate, phenomenology with Marxism. For he admits that "the *forced* synthesis of the two mechanically juxtaposed frameworks (dialectic and

1. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1972), pp. 32 f.; see also Appendix, pp. 301, 317, and his *Theorie und Praxis* (Frankfurt a.M., 1972). A more comprehensive review of this trend can be found in the introduction to Paci's volume, discussed below.
2. Paul Piccone, "Reading the *Crisis*," *Telos* no. 8 (Summer 1971), p. 128.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*

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phenomenology) is bound to fail from the very beginning, for either phenomenology ends up absorbed in the dialectic and ceases to be phenomenology, or the dialectic is frozen in the phenomenological foundation and ceases to be a dialectic."[5] Yet, he believes there is a viable, i.e., scholarly and well-founded, possibility of considering phenomenology as a "retrievable moment of Marxism" and thus achieving a double aim, a non-dogmatic Marxism and a socially relevant phenomenological theory.

It is the purpose of this paper to submit to a careful analysis one of the latest scholarly attempts in this direction, namely Enzo Paci's *The Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man*,[6] where he attempts to bring together phenomenology and Marxism in a sophisticated and original way. It is the most systematic attempt yet to build a synthesis between phenomenology and Marxism. Nevertheless, Paci himself characterizes his interpretation as a reconstruction and transformation of phenomenology.[7]

Paci's position can be stated as follows: Husserl's thought leads not only to the problem areas with which Marxism deals, but also to the same central ideas of human emancipation. Moreover, if one approaches Marxism from a phenomenological aspect, he may arrive at a critical Marxism. But generally Paci emphasizes that he is attempting to understand implications which were only hinted at by Husserl, "in a way not developed by Husserl himself."[8]

As for Marx, Paci attempts to discover "a most profound and most authentic aspect of Marx's work," namely, what Husserl calls the "transcendental foundation."[9] Marx's critique of political economy, Paci argues, has a paradigmatic character: it intends to reveal and demonstrate the root of objectification of all sciences and of the whole society. This is the historical, hermeneutical aspect of the problem.

The second aspect of the problem Paci's book poses is the systematic one, namely, the validity of arguments which claim to find in Marx's *Capital* the main thesis of transcendental phenomenology and in Husserl's *Crisis* a dominant direction towards the constitution of a new society and a new humanity as the *telos* of European civilization and its science. Distinct as these two aspects of the problem are, they cannot be isolated. Ultimately, it is the one decisive issue for determining whether an adequate understanding of Husserl and Marx can produce a valid phenomenological Marxism.

The concept of dialectic has a wide range of meanings and is, therefore, quite ambiguous. Nevertheless, at least two ideas are central:

1. Historically, dialectical method from Plotinus to Hegel and Marx held that every concept, category, or proposition implies its contradictory, contrary, or opposite. And even changes in the physical, social, or mental world are produced by contraries and oppositions and the struggle between them.

2. Therefore, dialectic ascribes a creative power to negation and the process of change becomes an advancement through rejections and conflicts towards a positive

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5. *Funzione delle scienze e significato dell'uomo*, translated by Paul Piccone and James E. Hansen (Evanston, 1972), p. xxxii.
6. Parts of this book were previously published in *Telos*.
7. *Op.cit.*, p. 446.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 269, 270.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 413.

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end which is the reconciliation of the struggling opposites.

However, these senses of dialectic are absent in phenomenology. For Husserl, as for Kant, the problem of the negative, e.g., the antinomies, contradictions, etc., is an embarassment of thought which has to be removed.[10] Therefore, I agree with Piccone about the writers who, before Paci, worked on a synthesis between Marxism and phenomenology. Almost miraculously, however, Paci seems to transform Husserl into a "dialectician."

How, then, does Paci conceive Husserl's "dialectic"? Since the term is used by Paci quite loosely, it means a wide range of operations and intentions. It is a critique of experience in the direction of mediations between abstract individuals and the abstract totality. The transcendental subjectivity of the ego, which is the source and origin of world constituting is an intersubjective ego in a living society, becomes conscious of his own meaning according to a common intentionality. "The dialectic does not objectively unfold in front of other subjects as a separate, preconstituted and mechanical reality. The dialectic is inconceivable without subjects, and vice versa."[11] Dialectic, conceived as an objective process isolated from the subjects experiencing it, is a mythological construct, a mode of objectivism. Hegel's method, Paci believes, is criticized by Husserl and Marx alike as such an abstract construction.

For Husserl, Paci maintains, existence always surpasses itself in truth. Truth can never be possessed. It is a meaningful direction of being, the infinite intentionality for which the goal is always unreachable and it is in the world merely in the sense of a demand never fully realized. In this sense Husserl proclaims that "only spirit is immortal" because spirit is the movement by which the existence transcends itself towards the meaning of truth. The totalization of final truths is the infinite task of humanity.[12] Put differently: "Phenomenology aims at discovering and revealing all the ties connecting individual entities. This is what seeing the essence in the individual fact means."[13] Essence, in counter distinction to facts, is relational and not isolated, comprising the typicalities of all facts subsumed under it. The essence of the individual, for example, is his life as individuated in the progressive self-constitution, and the individual truly lives only in essential relations, that is, when the increasingly more rational social life of the community in its progressive self-constitution makes individuation possible. In this way, the essential and the factual, the general and the individual, are connected. Truths are connected to a system of universal relationships. "In this sense, Husserl denies the possibility of a science of separated individuals, the singular, or atomic, entities separate from relations."[14] Paci believes that this is the central sense of Husserl's dialectical method: the phenomenological concept of truth is essentially dialectical. So is reason in its quest for truth.

Furthermore, on the social level the world is given to every man (monad) in his modes of life, historical destiny, personal features, and finitude of all flesh. But in

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10. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. F. Max Muller (Garden City, 1966), p. 246. The famous beginning sentence of the introduction to Kant's "Transcendental Logic": "We call Dialectic in general a logic of *illusion*," p. 221, illustrates sufficiently his attitude.
11. Paci, *op.cit.*, p. 281.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

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the human, finite vicissitudes of existence one finds a typicality, that is an eidos. [15] "There is a direction toward an agreement of ideas and a harmonious society of subjects implicit in the idea that every monad has of the world."[16] Philosophy is the science of this universality constituted in the world, and as such it is engaged in dialectic, i.e., in interconnections. Ultimately, then, the dialectical process, according to Paci's interpretation of Husserl, is aiming at the highest possible encompassment on both the cognitive and the social level. Every perception as an intentional direction implies other perceptions. Although this all-encompassing interconnection is always made possible, it can never be fully exhausted.[17] For social theory it means that "there must be a totality of meaning of the dialectic and a direction of truth of all groups and struggling communities... There is no rationality coinciding with the reality of the world and history. In the dialectic, the classes and communities negated by other classes and communities tend to negate the negation. This means that subjects, groups, and communities are formed in a praxis and cannot oppose the positive meaning with their own self-destruction." [18] At the center of the dialectic is the active man who always remakes himself. Likewise, the world transforms itself in history.

One is entitled to argue that Paci uses the concept of dialectic most loosely in describing Husserl's notion of the reciprocal interpenetration of body and mind, and of the external and internal. In general, however, the concept is used by Paci for the interrelation between the part and the whole, when the part is absorbed in the whole in which it is fully realized. Paci then concludes that phenomenological reason is dialectical since it is not fragmented into theoretical, practical and ethical reason. It is a whole. Truth is the whole, and therefore dialectical, as in the philosophy of Hegel.

An analysis of any text of Husserl can easily dispel the attribution of a dialectical method in his phenomenology. Thus, we find that the either/or prevails over the mediation, reconciliation or any sort of dialectical *Aufhebung*. For example, in his paper, "Phenomenology and Anthropology," Husserl insists, "It must, therefore, be possible to choose, once and for all, between anthropologism and transcendentalism without reference to any historical form of philosophy and anthropology (or psychology)."[19] By transcendentalism Husserl meant the cognitive process which aims at absolute, ultimately valid truths by grasping the changeless, essential forms of the world's intelligibility. Pure Ratio grounds cognition in order to be able to produce an explanation of fact. It is comparable to pure mathematics in its grasp of the a priori essences. Like pure mathematics which makes natural sciences possible, philosophy aims at the absolute truth, not at truth which is tied to specific historical situations, but at the ultimate truth which transcends all relativity. [20] True, the descriptive goals of phenomenology as a rigorous philosophy can only be approximated, and this only gradually. But this does not mean that they cannot be ultimately reached in apodictic insight by appealing to the eidos, i.e., to the pure a

15. *Ibid.*, p. 218.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 280.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 279.
19. Edmund Husserl, "Phenomenology and Anthropology," in *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology*, edited by Roderick M. Chisholm (New York, 1967), p. 130.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 139, 141.

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priori of any factual object or region of objects. How undialectically phenomenology discusses truth is obvious from the paper's insistence on the identification of truth with self-evidence and with intuition of absoluteness of transcendental subjectivity.

The reality of world objects cannot be naively presupposed as self-evidently existing. Therefore, Descartes grounded self-evidence in the subjectivity of consciousness. In this way, however, the foundation of all knowledge of world and of self in autonomous transcendental subjectivity became a problem in itself, in fact the central problem of phenomenology. Husserl emphasizes that transcendental subjectivity experiences "constant certitudes of existence"[21] and ultimately asserts itself as the "apodictic ego," prior to the existence of the world. Transcendental subjectivity is not the concrete, mundane ego. It is rather the ego that brackets the existence of the world and to which the world presents itself in its phenomenal validity. Only by this reflective activity of bracketing the world and grasping it as a flow of the activities of experiencing and theoretical judgment does the transcendental field open itself. But in this change of attitude by the "phenomenological reduction," there comes to the forefront the fundamental contrast between the transcendental ego, with its apodictic absoluteness on the one hand, and the psychological ego with its historical relativity on the other hand. And Husserl assures the reader that only the consistent, although provisory, renunciation of the world through the phenomenological reduction opens the way to truly valid cognition, in the sense that transcendental subjectivity confers meaning and validity upon a world. Phenomenology is the science which elucidates the essential structures of consciousness, actual and potential, of meanings (noemata) which make the world objective, i.e., consolidate the varieties of temporal modes of consciousness in identical things. Husserl remind us that phenomenology interrogates consciousness in order to force it to betray its secrets, rather than interrogate nature as Bacon recommended.[22] In this whole discussion of transcendental subjectivity versus the psychological or anthropological ego, there is no mention of any possibility of dialectical mediation, nor is there interconnection considered dialectical. Rather, the either/or is emphasized.

Or, let us turn to Husserl's discussion of the phenomenology of reason in *Ideas* (Chapter 12). Clear distinctions are made here between assertoric and apodictic forms of evidential vision, between pure insight and impure insight, and ultimately between adequate and inadequate self-evidence. For example, Husserl maintains that in principle a thing in the real world, within its finite limits, can appear only inadequately. Many things are related to one and the same determinable X and continuously advance towards a more detailed indication of the possibilities which they present. They are filled out by a variety of aspects, strengthened or weakened, complementing each other and conflicting with each other. This is the realm of factual things in their mode of existence. But to every category of such things corresponds an essence (as explained in Chapter 1 of *Ideas*), an eidos which as a datum of essential intuition is primordially self-evident.[23] In the same chapter truth

21. *Ibid.*, p. 131: "Philosophy, genuine science, aims at absolute, ultimately valid truths which transcend all relativity... Although philosophy, genuine science, can only be approximated gradually, it is reached by appealing to the *eidos*, the pure *a priori*, which anybody can grasp in apodictic insight."
22. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
23. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York, 1967), p. 357.

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is defined as a correlate of the perfect rational character of believing certainty, that is, of that which is eidetically self-evident to an actual consciousness. In the final account, truth is identified with the self-evident position as a correlate of man's self-evidencing judging from the standpoint of the subject, "but is also a name for every kind of self-evidencing judging itself, and, lastly, for every doxic act of reason."[24] The point I wish to make clear is that Paci neglected the eidetic functions of transcendental subjectivity, which establish necessities and possibilities as an absolutely unassailable standard for the fact. The transcendental standpoint seeks out everywhere a systematic and "eidetic morphology,"[25] which cannot be found on a natural basis. It envelopes the whole natural world through the bestowal of meaning which conforms to essences. The phenomenological method consists ultimately in the elaboration of its central discovery of the importance of the intuition by which real existence can be conceived. Phenomenology aims to be the description of how essences, ideal constructs, make cognition possible, with absolute certainty. But the fact that apprehension of essences is a piece-meal operation, starting from singular essences and progressing to more comprehensive regional essences, does not make eidetic reduction dialectical.

It is clear that essence is not "individuation," as described by Paci above. The phenomenological epoche, the access to all essences, does the opposite of all individuation. It suspends any positing of reality. The real world, as it exists naturally, is neither negated nor doubted but bracketed. This assumes that the existent world is not necessary for the foundation of knowledge. Hence, the entire phenomenological method, with its techniques of bracketing, refutes the idea that an external existence can provide an absolute foundation for our knowledge of the world. We know by now that the primary, radical, apodictically-established foundation can be transcendental consciousness alone.

On this analysis, phenomenology is a non-dialectical, if not anti-dialectical, method of apprehension. Its basic techniques, e.g., the epoche, variations of the imagination, the "free fancies," eidetic and transcendental reductions show that none of this is dialectical in any accepted sense of the term. As a philosophy *qua* rigorous science, phenomenology aims at establishing a constancy of "universal humanity of reason as a binding necessity of the essence" ("Universale Vernunftmenschheit" als "verbindende Wesensnotwendigkeit").[26] Hence, truth for Husserl is not the dialectical movement toward the all-encompassing whole. We do not have to wait for the self-differentiation of the infinite self-positing consciousness and its coming back to itself before we intuit truth in a self-evidential way.

However, the problems of phenomenology, I believe, are capable of dialectical development, and indeed need such development. In special need of such development are the relations between the transcendental and the psychological subject, between essences and facts, between noesis and noema, between transcendentalism and historicism, between the primary life-world and derivative historical culture. The relations between the poles of subjectivity and objectivity are loaded with dialectical tensions and mediations. If transcendental subjectivity is indeed the

24. *Ibid.*, p. 359.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 371.
26. *Erste Philosophie.* Erster Teil: *Kritische Ideengeschichte* (1923-24). Herausgegeben von Rudolf Boehm (Husserliana, Band VII, The Hague, 1956), p. 23.

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absolute, it is constantly in need of mediating steps of self-realization. Paci attempted to develop some dialectical motif of Husserl's system, but since he did not realize the full anti-dialectical impact of phenomenological transcendentalism, he could hardly recognize the difficulty of his task and look for dialectics where they perhaps could be found, despite Husserl's conscous eidetic transcendentalism.

What does praxis mean for Husserl, according to Paci's interpretation? Since the totality of world experience is never actually concluded as an established reality, but is rather an infinite and teleological process, depending upon man's accomplishments, one may maintain that the meaning of all reality is constituted in human praxis. The world is a unity of meaningfulness which has to be constituted. For an object to be given means that the complexity and multiplicity of its ways of appearing comes to a definiteness and unity, in virtue of bestowing upon it a definite individual meaning. This constitution is called by Paci, if I understand his interpretation correctly, praxis. Thus, theory and praxis are not opposites. Phenomenological theory is man's becoming conscious in time and in the world. It has universal validity because it rediscovers in every part, according to the principle of universal correlaton, the horizon toward which this part is directed (every monad is intending) as to its final goal. Telos and praxis are correlated. Praxis seems to be the term for intentionality, constitution, and self-reflection rather than merely for acts guided by these operations of the transcendental subject. Praxis, then, for Paci, is identical with the most theoretical acts of foundation itself. The struggle against occlusion and oblivion of the subjective root of all constitutional acts, the clarifying of this genesis, and the arriving at universally valid results is for him "scientific praxis." Furthermore, phenomenology is described by Paci as the science of the life-world, as the act of becoming conscious, of man's historical situation.[27] Praxis, then, means both the theoretical foundation of phenomenological description of the world and the transformation of the world.

This is, I think, a misinterpretation of Husserl's intention. The relation between theory and praxis in Husserl's thought seems to be quite different. In what follows, therefore, I will endeavor to show how my view of this relation differs from Paci's. But let me start by underscoring that Husserl's self-reflection in the *Crisis* has obviously "bracketed" the real conflicts of the European scene on a national and international level, and thus it became a very general, reflective analysis, without providing directives for the solution of the pressing problems of socio-political practice. The ultimate aim of his critical self-understanding was only in a vague way connected with "praxis" in a socio-political sense. His main purpose was to rescue man from dispersion in scientific materialism. In this sense, it was rather abstract and academic. I would agree, then, with Marvin Farber's statement that "A philosopher who refuses or neglects to take account of the pressing practical problems of his day (the well-known ones: capital and labor, imperialism and war, etc.) incurs the cardinal error of making his reflection 'empty' in a most important respect."[28] Of course, Paci does not see Husserl's reflections this way. Paci makes the distinction "between mundane praxis and praxis free of the mundane." The former is conditioned by the various interests of the subject in his life work, the latter is dis-

27. Paci, *op.cit.*, p. 282.

28. Marvin Farber, *Naturalism and Subjectivism* (Albany, 1959), p. 294. On the great importance of this emphasis see below.

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interested, free from fetishism, and takes place in the historical world of inter-monadic rationality. This latter praxis, disinterested in partial fetishized goals but rather directed toward the whole, is the proper return to subjectivity in action, oriented toward a universal telos.[29] "The praxis free from the mundane provides the opening to the world as a universal horizon."[30] It reconstitutes the historical world as an intermonadic life with others. But this disinterested praxis was precisely called by Husserl theory, and in terms of the pressing world problems, this theory looks quite "empty," in the above sense.

What did Husserl really mean by theory and praxis? Husserl defined philosophical *theory* as the "knowledge of the totality of what is," in which no single truth may be absolutized and isolated. This function philosophy can fulfill only through phenomenology. Both the natural and the theoretical scientific attitude of modern naturalism which dominates Western civilization are naively one-sided "and constantly failed to be understood as such."[31] Both the natural attitude and scientific naturalism take it for granted that they can obtain truth in itself and do not notice that "they necessarily pre-suppose themselves in advance as communalized men and their surrounding world, in their historical time."[32]

In a passage of the Vienna lecture in which Husserl mentions *praxis* most emphatically, he stresses that his "new sort of praxis" is primarily a critique of the accepted life-goals as well as an intention to transform mankind into "a new humanity made capable of an absolute self-responsibility on the basis of absolute theoretical insights."[33] This will be the highest synthesis of theory and practice. Essentially, Husserl maintains that there are two fundamentally different kinds of praxis, derived from a theoretical framework which prescribes norms and procedures. The first kind of praxis is a set of operations in accord with the theoretical totality of hypotheses and is destined to function normatively, like logical operations. All praxis of this kind, based on science, is related to a sphere of interest, and has the practical aim of satisfying the needs implied in these interests. This interested practical activity is based on a dogmatic theory. Any theory is dogmatic where transcendental reflection is absent.

The second kind of praxis is based on transcendental reflection and is very often identified with it. This reflection considers thematically those who make judgments, and how they make normative use of the so-called laws. It is thematically directed also towards possible errors, temptations, and failures. The first type of praxis implies a naive ontology, either as suggested by the prescientific knowledge of the surrounding life-world or by objective science which transposes this prescientific, imperfect knowledge in accord with ideally determined "truths-in-themselves." The term transcendental (above) Husserl uses in the Kantian sense as "the motif of inquiring back into the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge, the motif of the knower's reflecting upon himself and his knowing life in which all the scientific structures that are valid for him occur purposefully, are stored up in acquisitions, and have become and continue to become freely available."[34] The

29. Paci, *op.cit.*, p. 44.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 296.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*, p. 283.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 97 f.

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ultimate source in which all praxis and theory is grounded bears the title "I myself," subjectivity. The praxis of this transcendental cognitive enterprise was described by Husserl as the most radical critique of accepted values, or the revolutionary elevation of mankind to a self-responsible humanity on the basis of absolute theoretical insights.

Logic too has to be founded transcendentally, if one wants to capture "the living intention of logicians."[35] Since the sciences have forgotten their intentional meaning by underscoring their logical procedures, this meaning has to be rediscovered and connected to time, to the constitution of the entire world by transcendental subjectivity. The sciences of the factual have a strong tendency to conceal the original meaning realized by the living experience.

For Husserl, theory is the establishment and elucidation of immutable first principles, e.g., that which lies at the base of knowledge for Aristotle, or the "Transcendentals" for Medieval philosophers. These first principles are the ultimate basis upon which the structure of our concept is built, precisely what Kant called transcendental. Theory discovers, explicates, and justifies the principles which are implicitly functioning in all cognitions, omnipresent but unrecognized.

In spite of his criticism of the metaphysical presuppositions of the classic and the modern world views as objectivistic, Husserl's concept of theory had moral implications which are very close to the classic virtues. His theory, oriented towards essential necessities, believed that contemplation of these necessities is the highest achievement of reason both in the cognitive and in the moral dimension. It leads to a life of self-understanding, that is, to human autonomy and self-responsibility. Husserl's strong emphasis, then, is on pure theory, from which he believes an enlightened, rational "conduct of life" emerges, as in the Platonic tradition. He believed that modern science, particularly modern physics, has abandoned the ideal of true theory, thereby becoming "naive and objectivistic," without insight into the connection between facts, laws, and theories of nature and the active pole of transcendental subjectivity which constitutes these facts, laws, and theories. The "inadequate" self-understanding of the natural sciences has had a devastating effect upon our whole Western civilization. The glory of modern sciences, namely their description of the world in its objective order, assisted by the mathematical model, is in fact the greatest impediment to the proper insight into the true structure of the world as regards both its subject pole and its object pole. This objectivism of the sciences neglects the transcendental basis of all possible objects of scientific analysis which are constituted in the self-evidence of a given life-world. The mathematical grasp of nature, as well as the technological control, must be retraced analytically back to transcendental subjectivity. If not, man is alienated from the sources of his selfhood. Husserl insists that this is precisely the difference between any scientific theory and his philosophical theory. Whereas all scientific theories originate out of the needs of human practice, particularly in order to secure what is given as existing, the phenomenological theory, although not losing any interests in the natural life-world, aims at clarifying the constitution of both the functioning practice and the scientific theory as well. Thus, theory, in Husserl, establishes the identification of being with intelligibility, in the sense that consciousness constitutes

35. E. Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague, 1969), p. 10.

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being, and only consciousness in its highest form as transcendental subjectivity is absolute being. It is the elucidation of the meaning of transcendental subjectivity as the absolute being and of its acts of constitution in their various modes, horizons, and regions. Such a theory is certainly not a retreat into an unworldly special field of study. On the contrary, Husserl believes that only phenomenological theory enables us to grasp in authentic knowledge both the world and human consciousness, and thus provides an all-embracing account of objectivity and subjectivity alike. But in opposition to Marx, Husserl insists that phenomenology does nothing but "interrogate just that world which is at all times the real world for us."[36] It does not change it. Ultimately, it changes us. "Phenomenology subjects this world to intentional interrogation regarding its sources of meaning and validity."[37] This is what theory discovered in Husserl's thorough interrogation of the world. Praxis, as mentioned above, leads into three directions, the third of which is identical with the totally disinterested steps of theoretical activity itself.

After this discussion of Husserl's concepts of theory and practice, let us return to Paci's interpretation. This interpretation was, from the beginning, oriented toward a reconciliation of Husserl's thought with Marxist concepts of theory and practice. A consideration of these concepts will contribute considerably toward an understanding of the scope and intention of the new phenomenological Marxism. What function does Marx attribute to theory, especially philosophical theory, and to praxis, and what are their meanings in his system? The intellectual endeavor actually to abandon philosophy by making it an effective power in the socio-political reality, in other words, to "negate" philosophy (that is, to dissolve it into its full realization and concretization), is a strong trend in dialectical materialism, deriving already from Hegel, but modified according to anti-idealistic premises. Dialectical materialism, in spite of its foundation in philosophical theory, neglected the elaboration of a theory of knowledge, of society, and of history grounded in a comprehensive ontology. It is not too difficult to find the reason for this neglect. It lies in the primacy which Marx bestowed upon praxis, which he defined as labor, the activity which produces the possible objects of experience; or, really, objectivity produced by man's activities. Labor is termed the "condition of human experience that is independent of all forms of society, the perpetual necessity of nature in order to mediate the material exchange between man and nature, in other words, human life."[38] The surrounding nature is mediated by man's process of social labor, which creates the conditions of social life. Moreover, it creates the conditions which make the very objectivity of any natural or cultural objects possible. In this sense, social labor is more than an instrumental technical process. It bestows meaning, it conditions cognition, making it possible as an instrument for grasping the very reality produced by acts of labor. It is a kind of "transcendental" activity. Whereas praxis is active and future-oriented, theory (by which Marx meant mainly idealism) is contemplative and past-oriented, interpretative and not actively changing. Man, however, plans his future. Therefore, historical materialism must include "the energetic principle" (which Marx saw as missing in Democritus, and later in Feuerbach), in order to become an active power, and not merely a theoretical

36. E. Husserl, "Phenomenology and Anthropology," *op.cit.*, p. 140.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
38. J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, p. 27.

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contemplation. This priority of praxis over theory does not mean that practical activity can be performed without theoretical insights. Revolutionary praxis certainly must be enlightened by the instructions of theory and follow true concepts. It is not sufficient to be practical in the sense of utilitarianism or vulgar pragmatism. Already in one of his earliest writings, Introduction to the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx assured his reader that "you cannot abolish philosophy without realizing it," and, moreover, that this realization "can only be achieved by the negation of the previous philosophy, that is, philosophy as philosophy."[39] Against narrow-minded activists he defended philosophy, but against philosophers, that is, against contemplative quietism of theoretical abstractions and interpretations, he stressed his belief that philosophy cannot be realized without being abolished, that is, without change in form by a knowledge that leads to the realm of freedom. In this sense Ernst Bloch declares that Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach ("The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it") is "the greatest triumph of philosophy."[40]

However, for Marx philosophical theory could well be limited to critique, but in a sense different from the one employed by Kant. No logic, whether formal or transcendental, is Marx's point of departure for his critique, but rather the material processes of production and appropriation of products. His critique is ultimately a critique of political economy and an evaluation of the evolution of the system of social labor with its socio-political and ideological results. Although Marx acknowledges the importance of the superstructures, it is labor which conditions the configurations of consciousness and all their symbolic interactions and creations. This reduction to the modes of human labor and its history alone, limits the possibilities of Marx's philosophical interpretation to the impact of various aspects and techniques of work upon the ideological superstructure. His philosophy thus became a critique of capitalist society. Since the fundamental structures of social labor, and nothing else, are reproduced in the self-reflection of consciousness, all philosophy which does not consider the nature of man as a tool-maker and homo faber, according to the system of productive forces and relations of production which he confronts as something given, is, for Marx, merely "ideology."[41] Thus, Marx would negate Husserl's concept of theory as contemplative, interpretative, and abstract. He would compare it to Fichte's theory of the abstract subjectivity, or to the "I-idealism" and its world-abandoning praxis.

Is Husserl's philosophy complementary to Marxism in the sense of adding a new dimension—namely the emphasis upon transcendental subjectivity—for a theory of knowledge and for a comprehensive ontology? It is difficult to acknowledge that such a theory can be related to Marxism, except by a misinterpretation of both systems. Paci, as we have seen above, underestimated the significance of theory in Husserl. His point is that theory is reason, explicating the concealed telos of European civilization. The crisis of Western civilization, he believes, is a special case of the capitalist crisis in a naturalistic, objectified, i.e., socio-political system. The specialized, scientific worker objectifies himself in the sciences, which in their turn confront him as alien entities, often as monstrosities. The alienated reality of objects

39. *The Marx-Engels Reader*, edited by Robert C. Tucker (New York, 1972), p. 17.
40. Ernst Bloch, *Marx und die Menschlichkeit* (Rowohlt, 1969), p. 107.
41. Karl Marx, "German Ideology," in *The Marx-Engels Reader, op.cit.*

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determines human beings as objects. Science controls the scientist, objective reality, the living subjects. However, the interest of reason, of truth, is active in all scientific research, "just as the whole operates in each part."[42] The fetishized division of labor—field specializations which do not acknowledge the totality—is the crisis of the sciences; and phenomenology is that theory which describes this historical situation realistically and thus demonstrates its untruths.[43]

To summarize Husserl's main points concerning theory and praxis, philosophy and the sciences: Husserl argued that modern science and technology, in capitalistic and communist systems alike, have overlooked, forgotten, and suppressed the consciousness of ordinary man in his life-world. Material and historical affairs of the surrounding world are suppressed by the very structures of these affairs, which are presented to consciousness as objective entities in themselves. Husserl saw the problem of alienation as a rising central problem of Western civilization in the post-Renaissance period when the sciences began, most likely unconsciously at first, but later intentionally, to neglect, to forget, and to suppress the ethical dimension of human existence. The history of the techno-scientific attitude over the natural and the transcendental attitude brought philosophy and science into disarray.

One may argue that Husserl is attempting to uncover the lost unity of the human purpose of Western civilization and to rescue man and society from disintegration caused by the scientific image of the world which stepped out of pace with the personal, direct understanding of ourselves and the world. The *telos* of Western civilization, namely, the integrity of self and world, of the private and public realm, of science and philosophy, must be restored. This reintegration could certainly have immense political impacts. But these are not explicated by Husserl.

Phenomenological theory is considered by Husserl not merely to be a more rigorous science, but to be the only philosophy capable of saving mankind from the greatest and most recent danger which it has encountered, namely, of being lost in a scientific image of man and world, in a communal and cumulative enterprise in which every scientist is a mere replaceable agent of an anonymous process and every man is analyzed as an object and manipulated as such. Classical philosophy exhorted men to dedicate their energies to philosophy in order to preserve themselves from being lost in a chase after property, pleasure and power. For these were the seductions of the mind in times of scarcity. In the affluent society of today, phenomenology intends to provide grounds for self-understanding as a rescue from the heteronomy of science and from technological manipulation. In this way Husserl fights alienation by theory, or, as Robert Sokolowski correctly put it, "In Husserl the human problem, the problem of preserving the self against possible heteronomy and alienation, seems to be reduced to an academic, purely speculative matter."[44]

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42. Paci, *op.cit.*, p. 322.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
44. Robert Sokolowski, "Husserl's Protreptic," in *Life-World and Consciousness. Essays for Aron Gurwitsch*, edited by Lester E. Embree (Evanston, 1972), p. 61.

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REVIEWS:

Barrington Moore, Jr., *Reflections on the Causes of Human Misery and upon Certain Proposals to Eliminate Them.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1972. 201 pp.

The very conception and design of this book is calculated to annoy just about everyone. Its title and approach are deliberately "old-fashioned," so old-fashioned in fact that to attempt to situate it along the existing political spectrum would be to fall victim to only the first of many traps set by the author for unwary readers. One must allow the annoyance inevitably engendered by a first reading to settle before coming to terms with Moore's combative iconoclasm, for without this neither his book's virtues nor its limitations can be appreciated. Secondly, one must realize that an adequate "review" would require a paragraph-by-paragraph commentary and thus would be a book in itself: What else would suffice for a work dealing with "the causes of human misery"? The mood of ironic detachment is less subtle than that found in Frank Manuel's writings (see his *Freedom from History*), but the two authors have much in common; and one's reaction to it is likely to be a personal affair. I happen to think it has a legitimate place in the present political context.

Moore's book arises out of the controversies of the late sixties, when the opposition to the war in Vietnam dominated university campus politics and forced attention upon the radical critique of American society. A few like Chomsky responded by redirecting their activities and producing valuable studies of American intervention in Southeast Asia. Others exposed the cover operations whereby academics aspired to be captains (or at least sergeants) of empire. In its own way Moore's book is a response to this challenge, less dramatic than some others to be sure, but no less serious. And although the commotions have subsided, I suspect that not the least accomplishment of those involved was to make the radical critique a permanent feature of serious intellectual debate.

In general Moore accepts a substantial part of the radical analysis of American society, and where he disagrees with it he helps to clarify the issues. The specific questions with which he challenges the radical critique (in the chapter "Of Predatory Democracy") could lead to more precise formulations of the indictment, as well as to modifications in certain places. He summarizes his case on page 144, and I will quote only the general conclusion: "All I would claim is that neither singly nor collectively do the radical arguments establish a convincing case for a determinate connection, a presumption of inevitable and necessary catastrophe—and certainly not of catastrophe as the best device for attaining utopia."

Even where Moore exaggerates some of the difficulties inherent in the radical case, the result (I think) is productive: much more can be learned from this thorough but sympathetic critique than from repetitions of established dogmas. Moore has correctly isolated the two most problematic issues in the radical position, the notion of inevitable catastrophe and that of catastrophe as a necessary stage in the realization of a better society. Far too little attention has been paid to evaluating these inherited notions in the concrete context of advanced capitalist society; too often an abstract-universal model of revolutionary change has been employed uncritically. If Moore's book could be partly responsible for initiating a thorough re-examination of these issues by radicals, it will have played a positive role.

The problem of liberalism is at the core of this book: "The most important issues on which I disagree concern the radical rejection of liberal democracy, and more

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particularly the liberal ideals of tolerance and protection against the arbitrary abuse of authority" (112). Moore is not one of the conventional academic apologists who dominate the university scene. He knows that the official liberal credo is a sham and a cloak for injustice and imperialism. But his essential question is whether this mockery of liberalism should be opposed by attacking liberalism itself or by attempting to actualize it. Moore proposes the latter course, a campaign for a "liberalism-with-a-difference, i.e., a liberalism that lives up to its rhetoric instead of using it as a cover for imperialism" (156). This involves, for example, a strengthening of civil liberties, a drastic reduction in military expenditures, a redirection of scientific effort, and an end to compulsive consumption; Moore believes that various aspects of this program will appeal to broad segments of the population and that the ruling elite has sufficient room for maneuver in order to make possible a "relatively peaceable transition" to a qualitatively better society.

Obviously, no sure answer can be given to the question whether this is a realistic possibility. But I tend to agree with Moore that it is the path we should attempt to follow. I do not think that in the foreseeable future a direct challenge to the armed might of the capitalist state has the slightest chance of success—and especially if we mean by "success" the possibility of bringing about a humane socialist society. The radical position rests upon the fundamental point that a qualitatively better social order can emerge from capitalist society; and what is required now is a concrete examination of the problem of transformation within the specific dimensions of present-day capitalist society. In short, we may be able to identify the real bases for that better society in the process of formation within the existing one, and seek to strengthen them.

This position is not a general rejection of revolutionary violence in all times and places, since it refers specifically to existing conditions in advanced capitalist societies. Every historical situation must be examined in light of such concrete circumstances. We know, for example, that a faction of the Bolsheviks opposed the seizure of power in October 1917 and that they were able to formulate very cogent objections in support of their position (see Deutscher, *Trotsky: The Prophet Armed*, 291 ff.); we also know that shortly before his death Lenin had resolved to upset or at least to mitigate the autocratic character of Bolshevik rule (Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle*). Neither of these developments really support the view that on balance the Bolshevik seizure of power was "wrong." What we can say with absolute certaingy is that the achievement of a liberalist basis for political activity remains an unavoidable necessity for Soviet society. The current demands of the dissident intelligentsia necessarily focus on basic issues such as freedom of speech and due process of law. Evern regime based upon the victory of revolutionary violence faces the same imperative, albeit one that will be shaped differently in each case as a result of specific cultural and historical circumstances.

The choice of revolutionary violence involves an awful calculus, an estimation of the chances not only of destroying the existing oppressive regime but of instituting a better and qualitatively different order. No one is in a position to advise revolutionary movements elsewhere as to how to perform this calculus; on the other hand, it is sheer idolatry to attempt to demonstrate one's commitment to a common cause by mimicking the tactics of others. As a matter of academic interest we can discuss the question of the calculus of revolutionary violence in earlier stages of capitalist society in Europe and North America, but any discussion of its role in

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contemporary society must begin with a ruthless honesty and willingness to determine the existing balance of forces relevant to the hope of qualitative transformation. It is obvious that the internal development of capitalist society itself poses a constant threat to whatever substantial liberalist achievements have been won at any time. (A basic shortcoming in Moore's book is his failure to evaluate the forces that threaten the social basis of liberalism, such as public and private bureaucracies, governmental control of information, and outright deception, etc.) We must ask whether the transcendence (*Aufhebung*) of bourgeois society—which means among other things the preservation of its positive accomplishments—does not require us to defend and extend those achievements. I think that it does and that in his notion of "relatively peaceable transition" Moore has charted a course which we are obliged to explore fully.

To the extent to which the discussion focuses exclusively on a particular stage of a particular society, this book's title must be challenged. These are not really "reflections on the causes of *human* misery," but rather a much more modest appraisal of the dialectics of transformation in the United States. The degree to which its conclusions are relevant to similar situations even in other capitalist nations is uncertain. The fault lies perhaps in the opening chapter, entitled "On the Unity of Misery and the Diversity of Happiness": I seriously doubt whether we should presume anything about the "unity" of misery. For all we know, forms of misery may be as diverse as those of happiness. Moore admits this qualification, and his position on this point does not harm the substance of his argument; but a less pretentious title would reflect better the book's actual scope.

Another limitation follows from the level of generality in the discussion. Since this level is itself coherent, there is no fault in the argument per se; yet the exposition of "liberalism-with-a-difference" could have benefitted from a few case studies, perhaps drawn from the recent antiwar movement. This is because the exhortation at the end—"I believe very firmly that unless future radical movements can somehow synthesize the achievements of liberalism with those of revolutionary radicalism, the results for humanity will be tragic"—demands at least a limited exercise in the application of its principle. Without it, there is not a sufficiently clear distinction between this liberalism and the official credo. What will put this or any other form of liberalism to the test in the future is its response to crisis situations of varying severity.

Such a test occurred recently, during the movement in opposition to the war in Vietnam. The horror of the atrocities committed by the United States caused many persons to feel that more than a register of individual or collective protest was *obligatory* for them, resulting for example in the destruction of draft files. The manner of the action, which included a sincere attempt at a rational justification for it, demonstrated that it was not a wanton or mindless deed. If one accepts the justification, the crucial question is where to draw the line, since in a strictly formal sense even this might be characterized as an "act of violence," involving breaking and entry, destruction of property, and so forth. Another stage was the occupation of officies, the "forcible" exclusion of persons from jilitary and corporate recruitment centers. Does the list lead "naturally"—as some would indeed claim—to the bombing of research centers? If not, where is the distinction?

Even where the act involves no intended assault upon persons (as opposed to property), there is a central ethical dilemma for the participants that is common to

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all acts of protest, legal as well as extra-legal. This is the possibility of involving others, who did not participate in the decision to act, in the danger of a violent response from the police. Wanton attacks on peaceful demonstrators are not unknown, and onlookers have been injured or killed. Police investigations and reprisals against individuals merely for distributing leaflets do spread to those only marginally involved, and sometimes persons totally unconnected with the participants are caught up in a brutal wave of repression. Obviously the general character of a social setting will afford a rough idea of what response to expect, but there can never be a guarantee against involving others who were not a party to the decision. In armed guerilla activities, particularly in their early stages, the risks are clear and the response is predictable and horrifying; but the basic dilemma is present in every act of organized protest.

Let us take one example for closer examination. Students raid a professor's files and publish documents containing counter-insurgency plans for hypothetical or actual conditions in foreign countries. Let us suppose that the actual materials contain genuinely new information and that the professor's previous activities had given others reasonable grounds for suspicion that this kind of information might be contained in his files. The general risk—apart from the danger of arrest for robbery involving only the perpetrators—is that the proliferation of such deeds might turn the university into an armed camp and thus significantly alter the quality of education for all students. Is the general risk definitive, and can we condemn the act out of hand for this or other reasons (such as its effect on the freedom of research)?

I think not. I would argue that, provided certain stipulations are met (the suppositions mentioned above, and perhaps others), the act is not inherently irresponsible or ipso facto a violation of "liberal" standards. In the first place, such a scholar is not engaged in an isolated pursuit of knowledge, but rather has voluntarily placed himself in an institutional context; given the ideals of the university that are commonly accepted, the holding of a university position involves an obligation to conduct research only for demonstrably humane ends. Secondly, it is initially the right of the entire university community, acting according to its constituted procedures, to specify what kinds of activity are acceptable, and which are not, in the pursuit of those ends. But this right must be exercised; that is to say, when an issue such as counter-insurgency research is raised, the members of the community have a corresponding right to expect the issue to be fully debated and to expect this debate to include as many segments of the community as is practically feasible. I assume that certain activities will be excluded: Harvard University dismissed Professors Leary and Alpert on these grounds, for example.

If the debate is held, and if the results are satisfactory to the majority (including students as well as professors), this judgment should be binding on everyone *under most circumstances*. (The problem of legitimating acts in defiance of a majority decision freely and fairly arrived at is another matter which would require a careful analysis of itself.) But if the debate is not held at all, or is confined to a privileged elite within the community, or if a face-saving device is adopted (such as housing controversial research in a separate institute with a concealed relationship to the university), individuals have the right to take the matter into their own hands, provided there is clear evidence of a responsible attitude toward the act in recognition of its "exceptional" character. This attitude is necessary in order to enable others to distinguish it from random "trashing," for example, even though from an

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abstract-formal viewpoint both are illegal acts.

Only the outlines of the problem contained in this example have been indicated; a much fuller elaboration would be required in order to establish the point adequately. The dangers involved should never be minimized. Plausible reasons must be offered to distinguish such an act from the federal government's raid on the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, to name only one difficulty. But these clarifications will have to be accomplished if "liberalism-with-a-difference" is to prove itself in practice, against the enormous odds we must expect to find quoted on the wager that a relatively peaceable transition to a different social order is to be counted among our options.

William Leiss

Herbert I. Schiller, *The Mind Managers*. Boston: Beacon Press.

There is a tendency in the study of mass communications to begin to fantasize about the social powers of technology to the point where the dimensions of the social context become essentially irrelevant. With the move toward consolidation and monopoly in the broad economic context, the consolidation of culture by technological forms of consciousness manipulation presents us with the illusion of a *public mind* that bodes either affirmative visions of a new perceptual order (e.g., 'global village' of McLuhan) or catastrophic csonceptions of a robotization and virtually unassailable totalitarianization of the thought processes. In the case of the former, affirmative, vision of mass media, John Fekete (in "McLuhanacy: Counterrevolution in Cultural Theory," *Telos* no. 15, Spring, 1973) has offered an effective critique. By projecting the capitalist development of communications into a meta-historical phenomenon, *McLuhanism* opts for the reified account of history and progress as a cosmological assertion of a non-confrontational, non-combative future. Fekete notes, "McLuhan projects the specific forms of neocapitalist alienation as the general forms of mankind and arrests general developmental tendencies within their specific given alienated forms. The concrete present is carried over into the future while an abstract future is asserted as present. Facts become essences and essences, facts. All formulations retain as their basis the existing class determined reality... [McLuhan] abstracts from, and thus preserves, the existing class determined historical sedimentation of communications, its forms, directions of development and social use. The partial truths of his formulations serve as obscurantist vaccinations against locating communications with real contemporary relevance for making history" (*ibid.*, pp. 76, 77). Participating in the self-aggrandizing global *utopias* of the communications industries, McLuhan severs media from the problem of class, of social domination, of imperialism, and paints pictures not unlike those painted of a new, social-democratic world order by the bards of mass industrial capitalism some fifty years previous. This is the stuff of bourgeois ideology and Fekete's discussion is an important contribution to its demystification.

Yet, while McLuhan's ignorance of the class dimensions of communications leads him (or some of us) into affirmative fantasies which reinforce and mask alienated social relations, there is a tendency even among those who clearly tie mass communications to a *class analysis*, to share in the premises if not the allegiances of

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these fantasies. Herbert Schiller, in his new book, *The Mind Managers*, represents such a contradiction, for while his work offers an informational *objective* critique of much of McLuhan's sanguinity, he and McLuhan share in a problematical subjectivity. Writing in the wide and prolific wake of C. Wright Mills, Schiller presents us with a 'power structure' study of the knowledge industries and the informational process in contemporary America. His work here, as in his last book, *Mass Communications and American Empire*, is an important contribution toward the development of a politcal economy of sanctioned culture. Dealing extensively with the communications and information manipulation enacted by government; corporate-military, entertainment, political polling, the internationalization of corporate ideology (advertising and public relations), and the impending future of cable television (a prototype for an 'informational utility'), Schiller adds to the architectural discussion of ruling class elites and their structures toward control.

Yet while such a discussion of the 'Power Elite' has been an important aspect of focusing on the loci of corporate power in American—predominantly in the post World War II era—and a preoccupation of much left intellectual work, there is a problem when such an analysis is applied to the issue of the *knowledge industries*. For in rigorously demarcating the vast interstices of the communications-informational empire, there is a tendency to be somewhat less rigorous in the enunciation of a communications theory that takes class interaction and tension into account. Thus, while Schiller has done some admirable research into the burgeoning corporate hegemony over the *legitimate* channels of communication, and has discussed the ideological *freedom* and *neutrality* that serve as a would-be blind over the corporate trigger, his inability to advance a dialectic of bourgeois communications, leaves him in fundamental agreement with the McLuhanesque mediacrats as to the self-generating potency of media technology and domination. The abstraction of technology from an historical context, places Schiller's work in a long tradition of American social theory (both affirmative and critical) which fetishizes and reifies the immediate and tenuous into the absolute. From Henry Adams to Thorstein Veblen to Lewis Mumford to James Agee to McLuhan (a Canadian-American) to Schiller we observe a seemingly variegated and contradictory galaxy of thought, but one which reflects a common assumption that whether liberatory or oppressive, technology, the specific technology of bourgeois society, *works*.

Putting aside the task of a radical critique of bourgeois hegemony from the outset, Schiller sets the stage for an analysis which on the one hand damns the disposition of power and on the other accepts its basic internal tenets of control. Accepting the aspirations of imperialist power as basic fact, Schiller opens his study with the conclusive statement that "America's media managers create, process, refine and preside over the circulation of images and information *which determine our beliefs and attituds and, ultimately our behavior*" (my emphasis). Thereafter, his main task is to give a quantitative weight to his assumption about its power to effectively "determine" our history.

Within his analysis there are but inklings of the internal contradictions of bourgeois communications. Presented almost in the form of asides, and not integral to his overall project, such statements as the following only serve to reflect the contradictions inherent in his political economic approach: "it is only when the people begin (even naively) to emerge from the historical process that the rulers

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resort to (such) manipulation..." and "when the oppressed are almost completely submerged in reality, it is unnecessary to manipulate them" (p. 1). It is the sense of people emerging from the historical process, *not* "submerged in reality" that must define a radical communications theory that transcends the static pessimism inherent in a recounting of corporate tentacles in the informational process. Yet, for Schiller, broad social resistance is immediately and effectively subsumed in the mass culture; reduced to the epigrams of domination "the movement becomes the message!"

Caught up in the arena of mass culture, Schiller's projections for the future vacillate between the pessimism of an increasingly effective domination and the notion of a domination and the notion of a domination of enlightenment—that the media, facing widely known liberal critics (Nader, Ellsberg) and the malaise of young workers, "May be compelled for its own protection to abandon its support for the 'system' and adopt a vigorously critical stance" (p. 188).

The question is whether the power structure analysis offers an effective tool for 'understanding media'; whether defining the corporate involvement in formulating an ideological paradigm of knowledge is as useful as an analysis of the class tensions expressed within that paradigm. Schiller's contribution is, at its best, a cataloguing of corporate mergers, media experimentation and strategies for the development of ideological hegemony. And this is not to argue that his discussion of the military as a media *avant garde*; or of the electronics industries' widespread forays into textbook publication; or the *hidden* dispositions of the entertainments (*TV Guide, National Geographic,* Walt Disney Enterprises); etc., are without significance. It would be silly to assert that these developments have little effect on the cultural landscape of American life. But what one misses in such an analysis is something that is evident even in much of the material that Schiller provides: *that is* an understanding of the mass communications industries as essentially responsive to as well as (in fleeting episodes) determining of, the social reality and its tensions.

While the media are constantly trying to convey a picture of American culture and community as primarily an electronic configuration, and increasingly idealize an affirmative and 'liberated' conception of an atomized, isolated personal experience of that configuration, the ideological content of "mind management" belies an ongoing concern and battle with negative, collective and potentially unmanageable reactions to the *experiential information* of daily life in the neo-capitalist order. While the corporate managers would like to consider the *mass* as just another malleable resource, like steel or petroleum, it is important that such an assumption *not inform* an effective historical critique. In fact, a casual perusal of the interaction between corporate energies and popular feelings lends substance to the difference between iron and human. While natural resources are to be expanded and developed, the main tendency of "mind management" over its 50-60 year history has been political containment and control; the channeling of needs and desires whose fulfillment cannot be provided for within the capitalist economic framework, into the glorified confines of that structure. The implication is clear, and a scrutiny of the artifacts of mass culture (again, even as presented by Schiller) tends to indicate that rather than being effective controllers, the imperative facing the would-be engineers of consciousness is a population that is both explosive and unpredictable.

The 'critical' use of terms such as "mind management" mechanistically sustains,

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and exalts the reification of bourgeois social relations in that they imply a stasis, a pacified population whose activities and thoughts are but an extension of corporate planning. Ironically, a look at the phraseology of corporate and governmental *information* indicates a situation which is hardly pacific. While the Nixon administration would be expected, according to the rationale of "mind management" to be stuffing the population with an exaltation of corporate power—particularly in the realm of oil, electronics, munitions—much of the information is infused, rather, with a spirit of crisis, often an explicit recognition of popular tension and social unrest and a renunciation of corporate domination itself. Listen to ex-vice-president Spiro Agnew's 1969 attacks on the mass media, cited by Schiller as an apotheosis of mind control, verging on the direct governmental invervention into all levels of information flow: "the news that 40 million Americans receive each night is determined by a handful of men responsible only to their corporate employers and is filtered through a handful of commentators who admit to their own set of biases... [There is] a virtual monopoly of a whole medium of communications... [There is a] trend toward monopolization of the great public information vehicles [newspapers] and the concentration of more and more power in fewer and fewer hands" (p. 155).

This quote from Agnew is a particularly significant one, for it both embodies and attacks the basic dilemma of "mind management." In its attack on corporate monopoly it appeals to a generalized malaise with the dehumanization and powerlessness engendered by central control—yet does so in the defense of the interests of highly concentrated corporate power; particularly the war industries. Yet the discrete focus of that attack—on the mass media—is triggered by the dialectical contiguity of mass media industries and oppositional tendencies. Sustaining themselves as they do on the transvaluation of opposition to daily life, the media increasingly become a refracted display of such critical realities. In the midst of this contradictory atmosphere, the governmental administration creates a *silent* population, *those who feel and express nothing*, as its constituency. In its rhetoric, the administration focuses its attack on those who practice the first amendment—at home or on the air. Yet even here, among the 'packaged consciousness' of the *silent*, is the uncomfortable recognition that corporate control is intolerable.

The instrumentation of manipulation becomes increasingly an indictment of the basic truths of that manipulation. This has been a characteristic contradiction of American ideological manipulation. Elsewhere, the basic appeal of advertising, that "something is missing from your life, so..." is but a further indication that beyond the managerial lingo of *rationalizing* and *synchronizing* culture, a basic resource of mass communications is an ongoing and threatening level of popular dissatisfaction with life in capitalist society.

The extraordinary growth of the knowledge industries as a productive sector (according to Fritz Malchup, in the last 15 years they have grown from 29% to over 50% of the GNP, as cited in Schiller, p. 63), may be seen as but an indication of the difficulty and concern that popular resistance has meang in the 'management' of the human resource. While industrial technology (outside of the knowledge related industries) lags noticeably behind other sectors of the capitalist world, the development of a technology aimed at social control is staggeringly advanced. The historical motivations behind such a development cannot be ignored, yet Schiller in his acceptance of the terminology (if not the rationale) of mind management ignores and ultimately confounds the situation.

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An important aspect of this whole shebang is that the process of political 'co-optation' and the integration of oppositional language into the arsenal of domination, speaks to the social and ideological bankruptcy of the corporate structure itself. Unlike early capitalism, which generated its own ideology and value system (the Protestant ethic), the tendency of neo-capitalist powers to rely on their own opposition for effective values is but a constant admission of the inability to create any level of social stability in its own terms. The early emergence of advertising and consumerism was couched in an overtly social democratic language which embodied the conception of well-being and social service characteristic of the socialist and anarchist left. Today still, much corporate and governmental propaganda hearkens to a society without vested interests, or in which the life-styles of the rich have been made 'democratically' accessible. The communications industry is increasingly required to provide people with the language of its eventual demise.

Stuart Ewen

Michael Lowy, *The Marxism of Che Guevara: Philosophy, Economics, and Revolutionary Warfare.* New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1973. 127 pp.

For many on the international Left, particularly the young, Che Guevara has been the major figure symbolizing revolutionary elan, commitment and dedication to struggle—even at the cost of one's own life. Che's thought, as Michael Lowy notes in his book, "represents for these young people both an uncompromising, absolute and radical rejection of the 'system;' and the revolutionary initiative of the vanguard to transform it." It was not accidental, he writes, that Che's conception of communism was combined by the Western New Left with Marcuse's critique, Trotsky's analysis of bureaucracy, and general support to the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

The significance of Michael Lowy's brief but penetrating book is that he takes Che Guevara and his work out of the realm of romance. Lowy treates Che Guevara not as a romantic adventurer but as a serious revolutionary militant; as a Marxist who sought to develop an anti-dogmatic body of Marxist theory that would transcend both reformism and Stalinism and return Cuban Marxism "back to the living sources of revolutionary communism." In particular, Che sought to develop a Marxism that related to the human goal of a communist society: a Marxism applicable to regimes in transition to socialism; as well as a theory that would be an adequate guide to strategy for revolution in the Third World.

Although Lowy does not explicitly say so, it is clear that he regards Che Guevara, if one may use the Russian analogy, as the Trotsky of the Cuban Revolution. He points in his book, indeed, to the remarkable similarities in the theoretical-political outlook of the two Communist leaders. Lowy treats Che in the context of his opposition to Marxist "scholasticism;" i.e., Stalinism, and as a revolutionary thinker who sought to accomplish for Latin America the same type of revolutionary renovation against "the solidified 'Marxism' of the official [i.e., Communist] Left that Lenin carried out with regard to the 'Marxist' social-democracy of the Second International."

Economically, Che rejected "the Soviet model for the building of socialism" for

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Cuban society. To Che, Soviet society was but a "statized imitation of bourgeois consumer society," and he looked askance at Russia as a society in which he saw everyone working merely to "earn more money." This, of course, Lowy identified as the heresy of "criticism *from the left*," and it is not surprising to find that while in Moscow, some Soviet students "accused him of 'Trotskyism'." Che's violation of what Lowy calls the "sacrosanct taboo of anti-Trotskyism" in evidence in his declaration that one could learn from the works of Trotsky, was another indication of his desire to grapple fundamentally with the development of a revolutionary Marxism.

In the realm of foreign policy, Che saw the road to attainment of Latin American socialism through the unremitting waging of revolutionary warfare. He rejected the path of collaboration with the national bourgeoisie, and he argued that "only a socialist revolution based on an alliance of the workers and peasants can accomplish the democratic tasks of the Latin American revolution." Rejecting the "Menshevik type conception held by the traditional Left parties in Latin America," Lowy claims that Che applied Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution—differing with Trotsky on the role to be played by the peasantry—and opted for the inevitability of armed struggle. Che showed "ironical skepticism" towards those who believed in the possibility of a peaceful road towards socialist revolution, and he denied that any army in Latin America could hold "progressive" virtues. Through guerilla warfare, the mask could be torn from the power behind ruling authority; through the "praxis of the revolutionary vanguard," revolutionary will could assert itself against the conservatism of existing conditions.

Che Guevara held to a consistent internationalist strategy of world revolution, a strategy bypassing dependency "on the interests of any state." Lowy cites his call for "one, two, three, many Vietnams" as an example of Che's "return to the sources of Leninism," to the period before the Comintern was "turned into a tool of the foreign policy of the USSR under Stalin." Che's strategy meant for the Third World a "rejection of rotten compromises, opportunist maneuvers, 'peaceful coexistence'," as well as the avoiding of "subordination to the diplomacy of the vital powers of the socialist club." It meant armed struggle, people's war, and "permanent revolution until socialism is established."

Lowy sees in Che Guevara's rejection of material incentives, and his stress on the necessity to build socialism through reliance upon the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, as an example of the relation "between Che's economic thinking and his revolutionary humanism." Che sought to develop the only economic course, Lowy argues, that would avoid depoliticizing the masses and that would keep the October spirit as a permanent feature of the Cuban revolution. Only use of moral incentives would establish "the ideological hegemony of communist values;" only they could maintain the "dialectical relation between means and end in the historical process of transition to socialism."

If there is a weakness in Lowy's work, it is his failure to deal with the question of whether this alone is sufficient to insure socialist democracy. "Neither Che nor his opponents," K.S. Karol has pointed out in his *Guerillas in Power,* "had come to grips with the problem of political power in, and the political organization of, all those societies where centralized reformist experiments in planning and economic management were taking place." Karol notes that Che failed to discuss the issue of "the direct participation of all the workers...in the running of communal affairs."

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He could have argued, for example, that the trade unions had to be autonomous institutions that expressed and defended the claims of the working class. Yet Che "preferred to take shelter behind two myths, both of them imported from the USSR," that the workers had no other interest "than the acceleration of production in accordance with the overall economic plan;" and that the revolutionary leaders "know best how to interpret the thoughts and needs of the working class."

Karol's point is simply that the problem of Cuban development went beyond a simple choice "between bad reforms and true socialism;" either the market economy of the Soviet bloc or moral incentives. Without any development of workers' control, Cuba would have to move in the direction of technocratic reform or maintain the *status quo.* In Russia, this led to economic stagnation as well as political apathy.

Another problem, pointed to by Bertram Silverman in *Man and Socialism in Cuba,* is that without forward movement in the economy, dependency upon moral incentives might undermine a worker's identification with the revolution and militate against the growth of communist consciousness. In applying productivity exclusively through moral incentives, moreover, the government came to depend upon mechanisms of ideological control. The problem was, as Silverman writes, that "a system of incentives that relies on political directives from above becomes just another form of repression...the dialectical relationship between coercion and the success of the moral incentives must not be obscured."

Lowy is correct, however, when he makes the central point that Che Guevara sought to develop the productive apparatus by socialist methods. He rejected commodity categories and schemes of financial self-management as well as Soviet models that were based on the oepration of the law of value under socialism. Che wrote: "I am against material incentives because I regard them as incompatible with socialism... The law of value is meaningful in a capitalist society in which the economy is based on profit. It is meaningless in a socialist society. We have no reason...to conform to the economic laws of capitalism as if our aim were merely to run the old system more efficiently."

Rejecting the mechanical view that the type of incentives used had to relate to the exact level of development of the productive forces, Che defended the dialectical thesis that "it is through the revolutionary praxis of the masses, by constructing socialism *by socialist methods,* that both the economic structures and the behavior of man can be changed." Mobilizing workers by means of individual material interest, through competition between workers for higher individual wages, was rejected as a "vestige of the habits of the former society;" as an "ideological leftover from capitalism." Socialism, Che Guevara argued, could not "overcome capitalism with its own fetishes;" it could not be built "if the economic basis adopted is one that undermines, distorts, or counteracts the development of collectivist consciousness."

Che admitted the objective necessity of using material incentives during the period of transition. But he stressed that it could not be a primary mechanism and could not be allowed to become an end in itself. The society had to fight against their use and work to hasten its disappearance. The emphasis was to be on material incentives of a social character. To move towards socialism, Che wrote, one had to strive to "bring about the progressive abolition of material incentives—with all the habits, scale of values, and ideology they imply—and their replacement by 'moral

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incentives'...the social and political consciousness of the masses." Che stated: "Material incentives will not play a part in the new society being created; they will die out as we advance. We must establish the conditions under which this type of motivation that is operative today will increasingly lose its importance and be replaced by non-material incentives such as the sense of duty and the new revolutionary way of thinking."

The Cuban revolution is now fifteen years old. But rather than declining in importance, the leadership of the Cuban Communist party has moved to introduce material incentives on a vast scale. Careful reading of the "Theses of the 13th Congress of the Central Organizaton of Cuban Trade Unions" reveals an emphasis on productivity, establishment of norms of production, and the introduction of wage differentials linked "to the fulfillment, underfulfillment or overfulfillment of the norms." In other words, the very mechanism of bourgeois competition between workers which Che rejected has been introduced as the mechanism for increasing productivity.

Now that Fidel Castro and the Cuban leadership have introduced material incentives in all major areas of the economy, they will naturally have to deal with Che's vigorous opposition. How they are doing this, perhaps, is best indicated in the recent widely distributed interview by Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, a key member of the Central Committee and an opponent of Che's in the 1963-65 debates. Rodriguez writes: "I think that companero Che was the comrade who gave the most attention to this question, and I think that, within the international left, a total distortion of his views has arisen, either consciously or unconsciously. He has been projected as having a totally negative opinion on the utilization of material stimulus in the building of socialism. A careful and systematic reading of all that Che wrote on the subject...would permit anyone to see that Che had a clearly dialectical position on that subject...his fundamental position was that there had to be an adequate combination of material and moral incentive. The ratio of one to the other can only be established through experience. It cannot be predetermined by means of theory" (*Chile Hoy*, August 1972).

Rodriguez' account reveals the extent to which the Cuban leadership is itself engaging in the distortion of Che's views. As for Rodriguez' claim of attention to a "dialectical" position, it seems appropriate to cite Herbert Marcuse's reminder that "theory accompanies the practice at every moment, analyzing the changing situation and formulating its concepts accordingly. The concrete conditions for realizing the truth may vary, but the truth remains the same and theory remains its ultimate guardian. Theory will preserve the truth even if revolutionary practice deviates from its proper path. Practice follows the truth, not vice versa."

Che Guevara's theoretical-political outlook—his attempt to develop Marxism as a method for changing the Third World towards socialism—is adequately summed up in Michael Lowy's book. Like Leon Trotsky's works in the Soviet Union, Che's heritage stands as an indicator of the degree to which the practice in Cuba has strayed from the revolutionary ideas he espoused. Che's theoretical writings, as his entire life, still stands as an examplar of the necessity to establish "the ideological hegemony of communist values." One hopes that Michael Lowy is correct; that "nothing will ever succeed in extinguishing that light."

Ronald Radosh

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Table of Contents

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FROM BACK ISSUES

	Issue Number
A. ARATO: Lukacs' Path to Marxism	7
A. ARATO: Lukacs' Theory of Reification	11
R. ARONSON: Husserl and Heidegger: The Root of Sartre's Thought	13
R. ARONSON: Sartre's Individualist Social Theory	16
P. BREINES: The Impact of Lukacs and Korsch	11
S. BOLOGNA: Class Composition and the Theory of the Party	13
S. BUCK-MORSS: The Dialectic of T.W. Adorno	14
J. COHEN: Max Weber and the Dynamics of Domination	14
L. COLLETTI: The Marxism of the Second International	8
L. COLLETTI: The Theory of the Crash	13
G. DELEUZE & M. FOUCAULT: The Intellectuals and Power: A Discussion	16
A. FEENBERG: Technocracy and Rebellion	8
A. FEENBERG: Reification and the Antinomies of Socialist Thought	10
F. FEHER: Is the Novel Problematic?	15
J. FEKETE: Counterrevolution in Cultural Theory	15
L.J. & F. FLERON: Administration Theory and Repression	12
F. GEORGE: Reading Althusser	7
A. GORZ: Technical Intelligence and the Capitalist Division of Labor	12
A. GORZ: The Tyranny of the Factory: Today and Tomorrow	16
D. GROSS: On Writing Cultural Criticism	16
A. HELLER & M. VAJDA: Family Structure and Communism	7
M. HORKHEIMER: The Authoritarian State	15
R. JACOBY: Negative Psychoanalysis and Marxism	14
R. JACOBY: The Politics of Subjectivity	9
R. JACOBY: Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism	10
D. KETTLER: Culture and Revolution	10
K. KOSIK: Our Present Crisis	13
M. KOSOK: The Phenomenology of Fucking	8
W. LEISS: Husserl's *Crisis*	8
G. LUKACS: Moses Hess and the Problems of the Idealist Dialectic	10
G. LUKACS: On the New Edition of Lassalle's Letters	11
H. MARCUSE: The Concept of Negation in the Dialectic	8
H. MARCUSE: On the Philosophical Foundation of the Concept of Labor	16
M. MERLEAU-PONTY: Pravda	7
E. PACI: History and Phenomenology in Hegel's Thought	8
P. PICCONE: Dialectic and Materialism in Lukacs	11
P. PICCONE: Phenomenological Marxism	9
P.A. ROVATTI: Critical Theory and Phenomenology	15
P.A. ROVATTI: Fetishism and Economic Categories	14
J.-P. SARTRE: On Maoism: An Interview	16
J.-P. SARTRE: Replies to Structuralism: An Interview	9
T. SCHROYER: The Dialectical Foundations of Critical Theory	12
M. SOLOMON: Marx and Bloch: Reflections on Utopia and Art	13
TRAN DUC THAO: The Phenomenology of Mind and its Real Content	8
G. TROGU: Vasco Ronchi's Revolution in Optics	8
M. TRONTI: Workers and Capital	14
M. VAJDA: Marxism, Existentialism and Phenomenology	7
M. VAJDA: The Rise of Fascism in Italy and Germany	12

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